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*yours truly*

*W. Chambers*

STORY  
OF  
A LONG AND BUSY LIFE

BY  
W. CHAMBERS, LL.D.



House at Peebles in which WILLIAM and ROBERT CHAMBERS were born

W. & R. CHAMBERS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

1882





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## NOTICE.

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THE present small volume comprehends the 'Reminiscences of a Long and Busy Life,' issued on the occasion of the Jubilee of *Chambers's Journal*, February 4, 1882, but with additions which double the amount of the original. The additions chiefly refer to an account of visits to persons whom I have known in England and elsewhere.

W. C.



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STORY  
OF  
A LONG AND BUSY LIFE.

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THE year 1882 happens to be the JUBILEE year of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL. The first number having been issued on Saturday, the 4th February 1832, the work, consequently, on the 4th February 1882, had existed fifty years. Though an unusual, this is not an unprecedented fact in the history of periodical literature, and I am not disposed to make more of it than it is worth. I think, however, that I am fairly entitled to feel gratified at the singular success of a publication which, relying on the support of no party or sect, nor on any species of artistic attraction, should have so long kept its ground, and that now, after a lapse of fifty years,

should, judging by circulation, be more popular than it was in the early stages of its career. There is more than this literary and commercial success to be thankful for. It is that the hand which penned the Introductory article in the first number of the *Journal* in 1832, has been spared to write the present address. The varied circumstances of the case stir up so many strange recollections and considerations, that I may be excused for offering some remarks appropriate to the occasion.

The first idea that occurs in a very prolonged retrospect is the prodigious change that has taken place in the social conditions of the country. I feel as if living in a new world, yet with the wonted tokens of antiquity observable as of yore. Old notions and prejudices have silently passed away. The denser forms of ignorance have disappeared. Many pretentious bugbears have been exploded. Grievous indications of poverty in many quarters have been superseded by symptoms of individual and national prosperity.

There used to be frequent uproars about the anticipated ruin of labour by the introduction of machinery. Although machinery has in almost all the industrial arts been freely introduced, there

is more employment of labour than ever. By the removal of taxes which pressed severely not only on the absolute necessities of life, but on many articles in common use, a great saving has been effected. All imported food was taxed; salt was taxed to more than thirty times its natural value; soap was taxed; leather was taxed; paper of all kinds was taxed; newspapers were taxed; candles were taxed; window-lights were taxed; spring-carts, such as are now largely used by tradesmen, were taxed; post-letters were taxed according to distance, so that some people could not afford to receive them. At one time, as I recollect, tea was sold at eight shillings a pound; and sugar was four times the price it now is.

Through the removal of so many exactions, and from other causes, the humbler classes are now better paid for their labour, better fed, better clothed, and better housed; they are likewise much more thrifty, as is testified by the large deposits in the Savings-banks; their education, formerly left to chance, is now scrupulously cared for. Perhaps the most remarkable thing of all is the change as to facility of transit by sea and land through the agency of steam, while telegraphic communications are effected with the swiftness of

lightning. Life may not be extended in point of years, but time is immensely economised, and a man may now do more than double what he could attempt to overtake fifty to sixty years since; this, indeed, may be called one of the prime factors in national advancement, which is seldom adverted to. I could refer to numerous meliorations that have occurred in the general political organisation without having provoked disturbance. Common-sense now dispassionately settles matters formerly left to the dominion of temper. Notwithstanding a thousand apprehensions, the envied fabric of British constitutional liberty remains unchanged—only, I think, materially strengthened, with the grand old monarchy towering over all, and with its foundations securely anchored in the affections of the people.

Born in 1800, I am excluded from remembrance of the great convulsion in France; but the surgings of that terrible affair were still everywhere visible. Bonaparte was a name of terror. The British Islands were a universal camp. Soldiers were seen, and the beating of drums was heard in all directions. A resolution to preserve the country from invasion, seemed to animate all hearts. The oldest of my distinct recollections

as concerns public events was the Battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805, when I was over five years of age. At the firesides were heard gratulations on the victory, which at once settled Napoleon's projects of invasion; these tokens of joy, however, being saddened by the intelligence of the death of Nelson. It has always been something for me to say with a sense of satisfaction that I remember that great naval achievement, the Battle of Trafalgar.

## BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

The place of my birth was Peebles, an ancient royal burgh on the banks of the Tweed, amidst beautiful mountain scenery. My forefathers had here occupied the modest position of small proprietors since the days of Robert Bruce, and how much earlier I know not. To keep pace with the times, my father was instructed in the cotton manufacture. This business he commenced in Peebles; his residence being a neat, small building of two stories, with a slip of garden ground betwixt it and Eddleston Water, a tributary of the Tweed. To this dwelling he introduced his wife, Jean-Gibson, on his marriage in 1799. Miss

Gibson had been one of the belles of the neighbourhood. Her father, William Gibson, a retired store farmer, had bequeathed to her what was thought to be a fortune, which, though no great affair, helped to furnish and decorate her new abode. In this pleasing little mansion, I was born April 16, 1800, and my brother Robert, the next in succession, in 1802. A few years later, when handloom weaving had greatly declined, my father removed to a house in the main street of Peebles, there to carry on a drapery concern, for which, except from his suavity of manner, he was by no means qualified. The result of this false step will be immediately seen.

I was not fated to receive more than a plain education. Matters in the small town were still somewhat primitive. In the schools I passed through, there was not a map, nor a book on geography, or history, or science. The only instruction consisted of the three Rs, finishing off with a dose of Latin. It was a simple and cheap arrangement, diversified with boisterous outdoor exercises, and a certain amount of fighting, in which I was forced to take a part. My instruction in Latin having lasted about two years, came abruptly to a conclusion. Lieutenant



Waters, in one of the old novels, says, with more energy than elegance, that he still bore the marks of 'Homo' on his person. I likewise have the honour of bearing similar evidences of my acquaintance with Homo. One day, not being quite prompt in answering a question in Latin grammar, my teacher, in one of his irascible moods (which were always distinguishable by his wearing a short bottle-green coat), lifted a ruler and inflicted a sharp blow on the top of my head, which almost deprived me of consciousness, and which, while leaving a small protuberance, is on occasions, after an interval of seventy years, still felt to be awkwardly painful. So much for my acquaintance with Homo. With every respect for his agency in mental culture, I shortly afterwards bade the academy good-bye; and so ended my classical education, or school education of any kind.

It was a miserable business; but after all, I have reason to think it was the best thing that could have happened. An over-cramming of classical learning might have sent me in a wrong direction. I had secured the means of self-instruction through books, and that was deemed sufficient. All depended on making a proper

use of the means. My brother Robert, who was more tractable and meditative, took kindly to Homo, and continued to prosecute his studies in that direction some time longer. Both, however, were alike anxious to make up for deficiencies by self-reliance. A little room we occupied was our college. Every spare hour, morning, noon, and night, was devoted to books. We went right through a circulating library, which the small town had the happiness to possess, besides devouring every book within the domestic circle. Light and heavy literature were equally acceptable. The object was to fill the mind with anything that was harmlessly amusing and instructive. At from ten to twelve years of age we had in a way digested much of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and by this means alone we acquired a knowledge of the physical sciences, not a word of which could have been learned at school. Useful as it proved, such a method of rushing on from book to book is certainly not to be commended. Fortunately, we had good memories, with some sense of discrimination. Robert's memory was wonderful.

In the progress of intellectual development, we were assisted by overhearing the conversations

of my father and one or two of his acquaintances, on scientific topics, and subjects of general interest. Articles in the *Edinburgh Review* afforded themes for discussion, and helped to brighten up our ideas. I remember the deep interest we took in the account of the exertions of Sir William Herschel, in forming his famous telescope, of five feet focal length, which led to his discoveries in the planetary world. I mention this to show that where boys are brought up they should not be prevented from listening to conversations on subjects calculated to improve their mind, and that may add to their stock of useful knowledge. A few words thus casually overheard may give a beneficial bent to the longings of the youthful mind.

Auntie Peg, an aged relative, full of song, ballad, and legendary lore, served also a valuable purpose as tending to cultivate the awakening imagination. Her tales, it is true, were sometimes tinged with the wildest superstitions; but these we in time learned to throw off, and laugh at, though they were borne out by books to be found in the circulating library. One of these works, I remember, was reckoned a great authority on the subject of demons and their trouble-

some pranks in human affairs. It was styled *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, and was the product of no less a personage than a Professor in the University of Glasgow, who believed in all he wrote about. His book afforded a curious illustration of the delirious nonsense which seemed to have prevailed as truth in the gravest circles in the seventeenth century. My brother and I were prodigiously diverted with the grotesquely weird stories in this venerable production, which in its old dress has long since vanished from the notice of bibliographers.

Like storms, which though appalling, are sometimes beneficial, misfortunes in ordinary life are occasionally blessings in disguise. A quiet home was suddenly plunged in tribulation. My father was ruined by inconsiderately giving credit to a parcel of French prisoners of war on parole. This first error might have been recovered, but he committed the greater indiscretion of putting the management of his affairs into the hands of a plausible impostor, and was stripped of everything. It was a clean sweep; and it would have been utterly disastrous, but for the interposition of my mother, a woman of singular nerve and resolution, by nature a lady, and

whom circumstances made a heroine. She nobly saved the furniture of our dwelling, by relinquishing her liferent interest in some property. It was an agonising crisis. There was nothing for it but to seek a new and more promising scene of operations. By a wise resolution, the family removed to Edinburgh in December 1813. The wrench was sharp, but imperative. At this point, I feel it desirable for a moment to lay aside any consideration of the career pursued by Robert, my younger associate, and to confine myself to a personal narrative.

#### APPRENTICESHIP.

Anxious to be employed in some way connected with literature, I was, in May 1814, apprenticed for five years to a bookseller. He happened to be a relentless disciplinarian; but that perhaps was rather a good thing for a young fellow entering the world. As our family had soon occasion to remove to a place a few miles from town, it was my luck to be consigned to the lodging of a decent but penurious widow, in which humble refuge I am to be supposed as endeavouring to live for some years, and to make

both ends meet, lodgings and shoe-leather included, on a revenue of four shillings a week. It was a hard but somewhat droll scrimmage with semi-starvation; for, as concerns food, it was an attempt to live on threepence-halfpenny a day. Yet, it was done, and I never thought much about it. I was in the midst of a busy and enlightened community; and if I did at times feel hungry, I enjoyed an unstinted indulgence in the Pleasures of Hope. I was young, healthy, and resolute in perseverance. It was a most fortunate circumstance that nobody knew me, or cared anything about me. My only acquaintance was James King, an apprentice to a seedsman next door, to whom I was attracted by his scientific tastes and saliency of disposition. Some years later, he emigrated to New South Wales with a view to vine-culture.

At this early and uncertain stage of my career, general acquaintanceships would have been thralldom. Isolation was independence. I was, in short, left to fight the Battle of Life in my own way. Youths, generally, make a great mistake in the cultivation of acquaintances, who only embarrass them. The world at large is the true reliance. At intervals, I pursued educational

matters in a small way. I made experiments in electricity with the aid of an apparatus which I managed to purchase from very limited savings. I likewise made a study of French, with which I was slightly familiar from recollecting the language of the French prisoners of war. On Sundays, when I used to visit my father and mother, I carried a French New Testament in my pocket to church, and pored over its construction in relation to English.

In the summer mornings, when light cost nothing, I rose at five o'clock to have a spell at reading until it was time to think of moving off. I dipped into several books of solid worth—such as Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Locke's *Human Understanding*, Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, and Blair's *Belles-Lettres*—fixing the leading facts and theories in my memory by a note-book for the purpose. In another book, I kept for years an accurate account of my expenses, not allowing a single halfpenny to escape record.

At the time I entered on the busy world, there was much to exhilarate the youthful mind. The close of the French war was coincident with the commencement of the *Waverley Novels*. When *Waverley*, in three volumes, was issued in 1814

by Constable, there was a great commotion in the trade; my being despatched for relays of copies, and carrying parcels of them to an eager class of customers, being one of my amusing facts to look back upon. There was a great mystery as to the authorship of this and the speedily succeeding fictions; but it in time fastened down on Walter Scott, whose bulky figure and good-natured countenance were familiar in the streets of Edinburgh. The great victory at Waterloo in 1815, when Bonaparte was done for at last, caused immense public rejoicings. It was the end of a frightful and protracted effort, that had loaded the country with an almost unendurable amount of taxation.

The outburst of the Waverley Novels was followed by various symptoms of mental awakenings in the Scottish capital. There were two striking indications of the kind, each the antipodes of the other. The *Scotsman* newspaper, in the Whig interest, sounded the death-knell of hundreds of vexatious abuses, and caused a prodigious sensation. Taking an interest in its projected appearance, I, in the enthusiasm of the moment, made a push to buy the first copy issued; but such was the crowd, I failed in the



attempt; I, however, was able to secure the second copy that was handed out (January 25, 1817). The price was tenpence, owing to the limitation of advertisements, and the costly government stamp. Yet, the sale was immense. This is one of my pleasant retrospects. The *Scotsman*, in its modernised form and price, has long been the leading newspaper in Edinburgh. The other circumstance to be noted was the publication of *Blackwood's Magazine* by an enterprising bookseller of that name (April 1817). It drew around it a number of able literary supporters, Wilson, Lockhart, the Ettrick Shepherd, and others, whose *jeux-d'esprit* speedily gave the work a renown, which, with good management, has carried it on till the present day.

In the winter of 1815-16, when the cold and cost of candle-light would have detained me in bed, I was so fortunate as to discover an agreeable means of spending my mornings. The sale of lottery tickets formed a branch of my employer's business, and it fell to my lot to paste all the large show-boards with posters of glaring colours, bearing the words 'Lucky Office,' 'Twenty Thousand Pounds still in the Wheel,' and such-like seductive announcements. The board-carriers

—shilling-a-day men—were usually a broken-down set of characters. Among them there was a journeyman baker who had an eye irretrievably damaged by some rough, but possibly not unprovoked, usage in a king's birthday riot.

From this hopeful personage, whom it was my duty to look after, I one day had a proposition, which he had been charged to communicate. If I pleased, he would introduce me to his occasional employer, a baker in Canal Street, who, he said, was passionately fond of reading, but without leisure for its gratification. If I would go early—very early—say five o'clock in the morning, and read aloud to him and his two sons, while they were preparing their batch, I should be regularly rewarded for my trouble with a penny roll newly drawn from the oven. Hot rolls, as I have since learned, are not to be recommended for the stomach, but I could not in these times afford to be punctilious. The proposal was too captivating to be resisted.

Behold me, then, quitting my lodgings before five o'clock in the winter mornings, and pursuing my way to the cluster of sunk streets below the North Bridge, of which Canal Street was the principal. The scene of operations was a cellar

of confined dimensions, reached by a flight of steps descending from the street, and possessing a small back window immediately beyond the baker's kneading-board. Seated on a folded-up sack in the sole of the window, with a book in one hand and a penny candle stuck in a bottle near the other, I went to work for the amusement of the company. The baker was not particular as to subject. All he stipulated for was something comic and laughable. Aware of his tastes, I tried him first with the jocularities of *Roderick Random*, which was a great success, and produced shouts of laughter. I followed this up with other works of Smollett, also with the novels of Fielding, and with *Gil Blas*. My services as a reader for two and a half hours every morning were unfailingly recompensed by a donation of the anticipated roll, with which, after getting myself brushed of the flour, I went on my way to shop-opening, lamp-cleaning, and all the rest of it, at Calton Street. It would be vain in the present day to try to discover the baker's workshop where these morning performances took place, for the whole of the buildings in this quarter have been removed to make way for the North British Railway terminus.

The situation that had been obtained by my father was that of commercial manager of some salt-works at Joppa, about four miles from Edinburgh, a wretchedly sooty place for any one to live in. It was at this place, close on the sea-shore, that I passed my Sundays, and had weekly the pleasure of seeing and conversing with my mother, from whom I received all kinds of admonitory hints; the burden of her recommendations being to avoid low companions, to mind whom I was come of, and 'aye to haud forrit.' What was to become of me was, as she said, a perfect mystery; still, there was nothing like securing a good character in the meanwhile—that was clear, at anyrate.

My mother, however, had more cause for uneasiness on her own than my account. The aspect of family affairs was acquiring additional gloom. My father was not the man for the situation he filled. In fact, he detested situations of all kinds. His feelings at this period were in a morbid condition, the result of circumstances already adverted to, and therefore not to be judged severely.

Whatever were the precise causes of discord, a disruption was precipitated by my father having

the misfortune to be waylaid and robbed of some money which he had collected in the way of business in Edinburgh. Knocked down and grievously bruised about the head, he was found late at night lying helpless on the road, and brought home by some good Samaritan. The painful circumstances connected with this untoward affair led to his being discharged from his office. In his now hapless state, greatly disabled by the injuries which he had received, and without means, the consideration of everything fell on my mother. Her mind rose to the occasion. Removing from the sooty precinct to one of a row of houses near Magdalene Bridge, on the road to Musselburgh, she prepared to set on foot a small business, and was not without hope of meeting with general sympathy and support, for, by her agreeable manners and exemplary conduct under various difficulties, she had made some good friends of different classes in the neighbourhood.

With something like dismay, I heard of this fresh disaster—the climax, it was to be hoped, of a series of agonising misfortunes. The house at the Pans had been about the most revolting of human habitations, but it at least gave shelter, and bore with it some means of livelihood. Now,

all that was at an end. The future was to be a matter of new contrivance. Of course, I hastened from town to condole over present distresses, and share in the family counsels. On my unexpected arrival near midnight—cold, wet, and wayworn—all was silent in that poor home. In darkness by my mother's bedside, I talked with her of the scheme she had projected. It was little I could do. Some insignificant savings were at her disposal, and so was a windfall over which I had cause for rejoicing. By a singular piece of good fortune, I had the previous day been presented with half a guinea by a good-hearted tradesman, on being sent to him with the agreeable intelligence that he had got the sixteenth of a twenty thousand pound prize in the state lottery. The little bit of gold was put into my mother's hand. With emotion too great for words, my own hand was pressed gratefully in return. The loving pressure of that unseen hand in the midnight gloom, has it not proved more than the ordinary blessing of a mother on her son ?

' All this, still legible in memory's page,  
And still to be so to my latest age,  
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay  
Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;

Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere—  
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.'

Early in the following morning, I was back to business. My mother's ingenious efforts, conducted with consummate tact, and wholly regardless of toil, were successful. Her only embarrassment was my father, prematurely broken down in body and mind. It is not the purpose, however, of the present memoir to pursue the family history.

#### BEGINS BUSINESS.

My apprenticeship came to a close in May 1819, and with five shillings in my pocket—to which sum my weekly wage had been latterly advanced—I was left to begin the struggle of independent exertion. It is but justice to say that my employer offered to retain me as an assistant, but I had formed the resolution to act for myself. I was fortunate in the moment when thrown on my own resources. A London bookseller, who had come to conduct a trade-sale in Edinburgh, sought my assistance to arrange his specimens. I willingly lent my aid; and this worthy person, understanding that I wanted to begin business,

but had only five shillings of capital, gave me an excellent selection of books on credit to the value of ten pounds. Borrowing a truck for the occasion, I wheeled the books to a small place of business I had secured in Leith Walk; and there I exhibited my stock of books on a stall, which I constructed of wood bought with the five shillings. Again, fortune proved favourable. The books were speedily disposed of, and a fresh stock was ordered. A good start had been made. After discharging all my obligations, I had a few pounds over, and by following a rigorous system of thrift, things were decidedly looking up.

In the petty business I had begun, there was much idle time, particularly in wet weather. As a relief from ennui, and if possible to pick up a few shillings, I took to copying small pieces of poetry with a crow-pen, for albums, in a style resembling fine print. This answered so far; but it was slow work, with no prospect of permanent advantage. A brilliant idea shot up. I must have a press and types. There was the small drawback of having no practical knowledge of printing, and no money wherewith to buy a proper stock of materials. As for the



knowledge, that hardly cost a thought. In casual visits to printing offices, I had seen types set, and impressions taken. There was surely no difficulty that a few days' experience could not overcome. Then, as regards money, I happened to have three pounds on hand.

As if good luck was determined to follow me, a person offered to sell me a small hand-press, and a quantity of types sufficient for a beginning; price of the whole, including type-cases, only three pounds. The types were dreadfully old and worn. They had been employed for twenty years in printing a newspaper. The press could print only half a sheet at a time, and made a fearfully wheezing noise when the screw was brought to the pull. These were untoward circumstances that could not be helped, and had to be made the best of. I actually began, with these poor appliances, the business of a printer, in addition to my small bookselling concern. After a little time, overcoming every difficulty, I managed to execute an edition, small size, of the Songs of Robert Burns, with my own hands bound the copies in boards with a coloured wrapper, sold the whole off, and cleared eight pounds by the transaction. It was all found

money ; for the work had been done early in the morning, and during bad weather.

My next exploit was of a more ambitious description. It consisted of nothing less than trying to print a periodical, of which Robert was to act as editor. It was to come out fortnightly, and extend to sixteen octavo pages. The eight pounds realised by the success of my Burns, helped to purchase a new fount of letter for the occasion. The old jangling press was still to do duty. The name of the aspiring periodical was *The Kaleidoscope*, which went through a brief career of eight numbers, between the 6th October 1821 and 12th January 1822. The papers, mostly of a humorous character, were nearly all written by Robert. I was not able to do much in the way of writing. The setting of types, and the toil of working the press, besides other business duties, were enough, and more than enough, for, under the heavy labour, I broke down considerably in health, and was fain to give the whole thing up. After this, I for a time stuck to bookselling and to job printing. The larger class of letters required for hand-bills, such as 'Dog Lost,' I cut in wood with a penknife. I also printed some small

pamphlets of the nature of chap-books, which I was occasionally able to pen. One of them was a History of the Gypsies.

From 1822 till 1832, much writing to little purpose; I was, however, gaining literary experience, and from having to write at short intervals in the course of business, I acquired a facility in letting down and taking up subjects abruptly which has proved useful through life. The works latterly undertaken and executed were the *Gazetteer of Scotland*, a tremendously heavy job—and the *Book of Scotland*, a volume which sketched the special legal institutes of the country; now deservedly forgotten and out of print. Robert had meanwhile taken honours with his pen. The *Traditions of Edinburgh*, a work of historic and antiquarian interest—which was the last of my feats in type-setting, and drawing impressions with the hand-press—was issued in 1824. It at once brought fame and pecuniary advantage. Walter Scott called on Robert to compliment him on the work, and assist him with suggestions.

At this time, we had each separately removed to commodious central places in Edinburgh. The period was not a very agreeable one in which to live. In the reign of William IV., there were so

many things to correct, that society was kept in constant perturbation. In the midst of political contentions, connected with the Reform Bill, came an epidemic of Asiatic cholera, that spread alarm everywhere.

#### COMMENCEMENT OF CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL.

Although the period was in various ways dismal, there were occasional gleams of a brighter day. Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes sprang up through the influence of thoughtful individuals. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was founded. Above all, there sprang up a class of low-priced periodicals, mostly worthless and ephemeral, but being popular among the 'masses'—a word which had come into vogue—they answered the purpose of showing how the wind blew. Here, said I, pondering on the subject, is my chance. I have waited for years for a favourable gale, and it has come at last. Taking advantage of the growing taste for cheap literature, let me lead it, if possible, in a proper direction; let me endeavour to elevate and instruct, independently of mere passing amusement; and in particular, let me avoid

political, sectarian, or any kind of controversial bias. The matter being important, I in the first place consulted Robert on the subject; but he declined to connect himself with the project, though he promised to help with occasional papers. No further time was lost in cogitation. In January 1832, I issued the prospectus of the present *Journal*, and the first number appeared on Saturday the 4th of February. It contained an introductory article written in a fevered state of feeling, as may be judged by the following passages.

‘The principle by which I have been actuated is to take advantage of the universal appetite for instruction which at present exists; to supply to that appetite food of the best kind, in such forms and at such price as will suit the convenience of every man in the British dominions. Every Saturday, when the poorest labourer in the country draws his humble earnings, he shall have it in his power to purchase, with an insignificant portion of even that humble sum, a meal of healthful, useful, and agreeable mental instruction. Whether I succeed in my wishes, a brief space of time will determine. I throw myself on the good sense of my countrymen for support;

all I seek is a fair field wherein to exercise my industry in their service.' I concluded by notifying the subjects which would receive particular attention.

On the 31st of March 1832, being eight weeks after the commencement of *Chambers's Journal*, appeared the first number of the *Penny Magazine* of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It is learned from Mr Charles Knight, its publisher, that the *Penny Magazine* was suggested to him on a morning in March, and that the Lord Chancellor (Brougham), who was waited on, cordially entered into the project, which was forthwith sanctioned by the Committee of the Society. The *Penny Magazine*, begun under such distinguished auspices, and which, as is understood, had a very large circulation, terminated unexpectedly in 1845; though not without having exerted, during its comparatively brief career, an influence, along with similar publications, in stimulating the growth of that cheap and wholesome literature which has latterly assumed such huge proportions.

High as were my expectations, the success of the *Journal* exceeded them. In a few days there was for Scotland the unprecedented sale of thirty

thousand copies ; and at the third number, when copies were consigned to an agent in London for diffusion through England, the sale rose to fifty thousand, at which it long remained, with scarcely any advertising to give it publicity. Some years after this, the circulation exceeded eighty thousand. Robert's views having now considerably changed as regards the importance of the undertaking, he was assumed as a partner at the fourteenth number ; and from this time is dated the firm of W. & R. Chambers.

The early and marked success of *Chambers's Journal* was perhaps partly due to the fact, that at that time the price of newspapers was usually sevenpence, owing to the heavy stamp and advertisement duties. *Chambers's Journal* being free from these exactions, and being a sheet at the price of three-halfpence, while in point of size it was nearly as large as a newspaper, was accepted as a great bargain in reading. It found its way to nooks and corners of the country to which no such papers had ever penetrated, the instructive and entertaining nature of the articles making it a special favourite with young people. Even until the present time, I continue to receive communications from individuals embrac-

ing recollections of the vast pleasure with which as boys they hailed the weekly appearance of the *Journal*. One or two of these may here be presented, as a curiosity.

The head-master of a large and important school in the neighbourhood of London writes as follows: 'You sowed the seeds of my advancement forty years ago. In a village in Cambridgeshire, there were five poor boys whose united weekly wages amounted to seven and sixpence; one of them had given him, by a gentleman off the stagecoach, a *Chambers's Journal*. The boy read it; and got four more to hear it read. I was one of them; and we agreed to take it weekly. But the difficulty was, how was it to be paid? for one shilling and sixpence a week would not afford literature. I was always presented with a halfpenny a week for the missionaries, and so were two others. The other two could not contribute; but as their share, they would walk seven miles to fetch it. For ten years we stuck together, and were able to do a great deal to educate ourselves. Now, mark the result. I am the head-master of a large and important free school; another was till lately the head-master of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School at



Bristol ; another became a clergyman ; the fourth is now a retired builder ; and the fifth is one of the largest sheep-farmers in New Zealand.'

Another writer 'remembers how eagerly the *Journal* was read, in its early days, by all classes. At a country town seventeen miles from Edinburgh, a little band of young men used to walk out two or three miles on the road to intercept the carrier, and bring in the parcel of *Journals* consigned to the local bookseller for more immediate distribution. It was too slow work for these impatient spirits to wait delivery of the parcel in the usual course of carrier-work. Going home on the Saturdays, dozens of young men might be seen reading their copy of *Chambers's* by the way.'

The year that saw the beginning of *Chambers's Journal* brought gloom over the literary world. After an unavailing search for health in the south of Europe, Sir Walter Scott returned to Abbotsford in the course of the summer—to die. The scene was gently closed on the 21st September 1832. The funeral of this illustrious Scotchman was appointed to take place on Wednesday the 26th. Out of regard for Scott, Robert could not remain absent ; and in a vehicle procured for

the purpose, I accompanied him to the funeral. We felt as if taking a part in an historical pageant, amid scenery for ever embalmed by ballad and legend. The spectacle presented at the final solemnity—the large concourse of mourners clustered under the trees near the ruins of the Abbey of Dryburgh, the sonorous reading of the funeral service amidst the silent crowd, and the gloomy atmosphere overhead—is one never to be obliterated from remembrance.

The impetus given by the success of the *Journal*, and the prospects that immediately ensued, had the effect of expanding a small into a large business establishment. We never for a moment entertained a notion of transferring the publication of the *Journal* to any publisher outside. From past experiences, that was a species of assistance not required; neither did we need to employ the capital of others to carry on the undertaking; husbanding the profits that accrued, that was enough for all purposes. From the outset, the rule was laid down never to give bills, but to pay for paper and everything else in ready-money; and after fifty years, that remains the governing principle of the firm, with at the same time a careful abstinence from speculations apart

from our own business. There, in a few words, is the secret of the now large and prosperous concern of W. & R. Chambers. From the first, there was no time lost in financial scheming, nor in any distraction of the mind to matters of a foreign character; all was concentrated in advancing the single object in view. There was no playing with Fortune, nor frittering away time with frivolities and personal indulgences. Providence had carved out a career suitable to our faculties and instincts; and that career has been strictly followed—namely, that of endeavouring to instruct and harmlessly entertain through the agency of the press. Any other course of conduct would probably have been attended, as in the case of hundreds of similar adventures, by shipwreck and lamentation. Young men of ambitious views are apparently too much in the habit of treating their assigned work in the world as if it were a bit of passing amusement. It is, on the contrary, to be viewed as a matter of earnest and very serious concern.

The business so moulded into form was somewhat unusual in character. Unitedly, my brother and I were writers, printers, and publishers, and were accordingly able to act with a certain degree

of concentration. There was here a special advantage, but with the drawback that enterprise was limited in comparison with what might have ensued had we laid ourselves out for publishing works other than our own. Yet, with this limitation in scope, the arrangement answered our purpose. We had cut out a business in which the literary element predominated, and afforded leisure for cultivating the amenities of social life. This we thought preferable to hurrying into large and miscellaneous transactions, with the view to the pursuit of riches, but which would have left little or no time for those editorial duties that were our main consideration.

It may be mentioned, as an instance of mutual confidence, that my brother and I acted on no prescribed rules as regards the amount or character of individual labour. Nor did we ever reckon our efforts by a money value. Each, according to his own taste or fancy, did what he could for the concern. Instinctively we fell into our respective places; the result being that things moved on with the smoothness of clockwork. Ordinarily, the commercial and more mechanical details came under my attention, but, by dining early, I for years devoted the evenings generally

to writing. Robert sat habitually at home in the early part of the day, busy over his familiar essays, or some particular book which he had taken a fancy to produce. One of his smaller works, on which he had long meditated, I can remember, was a concentration of the moral maxims to be found in the Old and New Testament, which, under the title of *The Moral Class-book*, obtained extensive favour as an educational treatise in India.

In the benefits which attended the publication of the *Journal*, my mother, of course, participated. With the younger members of the family she was placed in the enjoyment of that comfort and composure which she had so meritoriously earned. My father did not live to see this auspicious period. He died in 1824; his last days being imbittered by unavailing regrets on the weak credulity that had been the cause of his misfortunes. There is some consolation in knowing that the person who imposed on him by his plausibilities, and who in effect robbed him, derived no permanent benefit from his tricks. At one time a merchant in good circumstances, he sunk into poverty and contempt. Jenkinson, in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, who imposed on people

by talking learnedly of the cosmogony of the world, was a kind of prototype of this ingenious person, though he did not affect any species of learning. His weapons were as deadly, but of a different sort. Belonging to a sect the narrowest of the narrow, he affected to be exceedingly religious, and he always spoke in a slow sonorous voice, as if his words came from the pit of his stomach. My own opinion is, that this method of speaking in a pompously dogmatic style, was his principal reliance for purposes of deception. My mother lived to see him so reduced to want as to be dependent on his relatives for subsistence. She died in 1843. She passed away tranquilly, surrounded by her family, and piously grateful for the blessings she had enjoyed.

#### FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES.

While thankful for having got over the difficulties that oppressed my early morning, the prosperity of later times has been sadly clouded by the loss of friends and acquaintances, a host so numerous as to make me feel almost as if left alone in society. In my experience, life is liable to be exceedingly embittered by contentions,

which are, after all, speculative and exclusively of private concern, or to be sweetened by an opposite course of conduct. The following is a reminiscence in point. A few years after I began the *Journal*, a Roman Catholic nunnery was set up in a pretty and salubrious suburb of Edinburgh. It was a thing with which the public at large had nothing to do. The ladies who had chosen this retreat under their religious guides, were quiet, well behaved, and unobtrusive. Nevertheless, in the vehemence of sectarian dislike, their windows were broken nightly by persons unknown, under apparently no restraint from the police. The circumstance was so disgraceful, that, by a letter in the newspapers, I called the attention of the city authorities to the outrage, and it was immediately stopped. Shortly afterwards, I was unexpectedly waited upon by Bishop Gillies, a gentleman and scholar connected with the Roman Catholic body, who came to thank me for what he was pleased to call the great service I had performed. This led to a long and agreeable intimacy, both in this country and on the continent. Gillies, now deceased, is one of my pleasant recollections. I mention the fact to show how, by a little act of kindness in the spirit

of Christian charity, and costing nothing, one may do much to meliorate his passage through life.

Of other acquaintances which grew up around me, recollection embraces dear old George Thomson, the well-known correspondent of Burns, and grandfather of Mrs Charles Dickens ; also another who had been still more intimate with the poet. This was Mrs Maclehose, the celebrated 'Clarinda' of Robert Burns. Now a widow in the decline of life, short in stature, and of a plain appearance, with the habit of taking snuff, which she had inherited from the fashions of the eighteenth century, one could hardly realise the fact of her being that charming Clarinda who had taken captive the heart of 'Sylvander,' and of whom he frenziedly wrote, on being obliged to leave her :

' She, the fair sun of all her sex,  
Has blest my glorious day ;  
And shall a glimmering planet fix  
My worship to its ray ?'

Vastly altered since she was the object of this adoration, Clarinda still possessed a singular sprightliness in her conversation, and, what interested us, she was never tired speaking of Burns, whose unhappy fate she constantly deplored.



I was much interested in holding friendly intercourse with another living memorial of the Scottish poet. This was Mr Robert Ainslie, a Writer to the Signet, of advanced age, who in the early days of his apprenticeship had become acquainted with Burns on his visit to Edinburgh in 1787, and had accompanied him in an excursion on horseback to Berwickshire and the Vale of Tweed. Of this memorable excursion, Mr Ainslie narrated a variety of anecdotes, which have found a place in my brother's *Life and Works of Burns*. I remember him telling how when on a Sunday at Berrywell, near Dunse, he and his sister, Miss Ainslie, accompanied Burns to church, and witnessed the incident of the poet taking a piece of paper out of his pocket and writing on it with a pencil the lines he presented to Miss Ainslie when she was turning over the leaves of her Bible in search of a text that had been quoted by the minister :

‘Fair maid, you need not take the hint,  
Nor idle texts pursue ;  
’Twas *guilty sinners* that he meant—  
Not *angels* such as you !’

And how fondly the lines were preserved as a relic of the poet ! Mr Ainslie further gave an account of his visit with Burns to the village of

Innerleithen in Peeblesshire, for the purpose of seeing the Bush aboon Traquair, rendered classic by the lyrical composition of Crawford. I kept up an intimacy for some years, almost till his decease, with Mr Ainslie, who was a man of singular geniality of character, and very amusing from his recollections of the past.

There was another and perhaps still more interesting character, with whom I happened to establish an agreeable intimacy. This was Sir Adam Ferguson, who had not only seen Robert Burns on his visit to Edinburgh in 1787, but had been a lifelong friend of Sir Walter Scott. One of his favourite anecdotes related to the memorable interview between Burns and Scott—the latter being then a boy of sixteen years of age—at the house, in one of the southern suburbs of Edinburgh, of Sir Adam's father, Professor Ferguson, author of the *History of the Roman Republic*. Scott communicated the anecdote to Mr Lockhart; it is deeply interesting, and may be repeated for a reason to be afterwards mentioned.

Referring to the evening party at which Ferguson and his young friend were present, Sir Walter says: 'Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember

which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side—on the other his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written underneath :

“Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,  
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain—  
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,  
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,  
Gave the sad presage of his future years,  
The child of misery, baptised in tears.”

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of *The Justice of the Peace*. I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word which, though in mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure.'

Sir Adam Ferguson was an intimate acquaintance of my brother, at whose house I frequently met him. Notwithstanding his extreme age, he

possessed great buoyancy of spirit, and was an enthusiastic admirer of the Scottish melodies. He died at the close of 1854. A short time previous to his decease, he presented to Mrs R. Chambers the identical framed copy of Bunbury's print of the poor widow nursing her infant in the snow beside the body of her husband. The print was afterwards presented to me by Mrs R. Chambers, and it has been hung up for public inspection in the Museum of the Chambers Institution at Peebles. There it has been reverentially visited by hundreds of visitors.

I likewise formed an acquaintance with James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, and was amused with his blunt simplicity of character and good-nature. It did not seem as if he had the slightest veneration for any one more than another whom he addressed, no matter what was their rank or position; and I could quite believe that he sometimes took the liberty, as is alleged of him, of familiarly addressing Sir Walter Scott as 'Watty,' and Lady Scott as 'Charlotte.' The Shepherd, however, was a genuinely good creature, and an agreeable acquaintance.

At the time of my first arrival in Edinburgh, 1813-14, the fashion of gentlemen's attire was on

the turn from the old to the new style. 'Shorts' and 'tights' were going out, and trousers were coming in. The old style was held to pertinaciously by those who considered they had good legs, and only after a few years did it disappear. One of the persons whom I admired for his handsome form and vanishing fashion was Mr Henry Siddons—son of Mrs Siddons the famous actress—who at the time was, I believe, lessee of the Theatre Royal. I saw him walking one Sunday afternoon on the Calton Hill, and learned who he was. He wore a bottle-green dress-coat, with yellow metal buttons, dark-coloured 'tights,' and well-polished Hessian boots, with tassels. Some few years ago, when his daughter, Mrs Mair, was alive, I took the opportunity of mentioning to her that I had had the pleasure of seeing her father in the becoming dress now described. She stated as a curious fact, that when her father was on his death-bed, he requested that he might be buried in that very dress, with his Hessian boots on, as if going out for a walk. Which request was of course complied with.

Another gentleman who held tenaciously to the bottle-green coat with yellow metal buttons, dark 'tights,' and highly polished Hessians, with

tassels, was Mr James Simpson, Advocate, afterwards familiarly known as 'Waterloo Simpson,' from having written an interesting account of his visit to the field of Waterloo, immediately after the battle. The first time I saw him he was skating on Duddingston Loch, and admired not less for his appearance, than for the graceful curves that he was making on the ice with his skates. I was destined, at a subsequent period, when he was long past Hessians, and had subsided into trousers, to enjoy a considerable intimacy with Simpson. He was less of a lawyer, than a humorous conversationalist and a public lecturer on topics connected with social progress. He was said to be very vain—possibly some tradition connected with the 'tights' and Hessians being the source of the scandal. But that I cared nothing about. I liked him for his broad and tolerant views and his obliging disposition.

After the commencement of the *Journal*, Simpson took in a kindly manner to my brother and myself, and I had the pleasure of being introduced by him to a number of individuals in the higher and learned classes of society. Through him, I became acquainted with two noted men of the time, George Combe, author of the *Con-*

*stitution of Man*, and his brother, Dr Andrew Combe, author of a valuable treatise on *Physiology applied to the Preservation of Health*. Dr Andrew Combe, one of the most amiable persons I ever knew, had the good fortune to be appointed physician to Leopold, king of the Belgians, a position, however, which after a few years he relinquished on the score of failing health. He did me the kindness to introduce me favourably to M. Quetelet, the eminent statistician of Brussels, one of whose popular treatises my brother and I had the satisfaction of publishing in a translated form for general circulation.

Simpson's services did not end here. He happened to be an intimate acquaintance of the Marquis of Lansdowne, an enlightened Whig statesman of the Reform Bill period, who applied to him for information as to 'Who were these Chamberses that had been lately making such a stir with their *Journal*?' I never heard what reply Simpson made to the inquiry. All I know is, that on my visit to London a short time afterwards, I had the honour to receive a polite invitation to visit the Marquis at Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, which I did. I felt a pleasure in seeing and conversing with one whose

fame as an eminent public speaker, under the name of Lord Henry Petty, was familiar to me in my early days. Nor could I help feeling an interest in seeing the descendant of William Petty, the son of a Kentish draper, who, being brought up a surgeon, was so adroit as to restore to life a woman who had been hanged for child-murder, and thus attaining a distinguished reputation, his descendants finally merged in a peerage, of whom I had the living representative before me, that venerable statesman, Henry, third Marquis of Lansdowne.

In his Introduction to the *Traditions of Edinburgh*, my brother mentions that he received some information concerning past times from a Mrs Murray, who remembered the Rebellion of 1745, and was nearly a hundred years of age. Her mother's brother was the famous Lord Chief-justice Mansfield, and she had always moved in the best circles. This venerable lady had two sons, who at her decease were well advanced in life. The elder of them was William Murray of Henderland; the other was John Archibald Murray, a lawyer, who was elected member of parliament for the Leith Burghs, 18th December 1832. The election of a Whig lawyer was con-



sidered a great triumph, and Murray, though a bulky man, good-naturedly allowed himself to be carried shoulder-high in an arm-chair by a group of sailors, all the way from Leith to his house in George Street, Edinburgh, amidst the shouts of the multitude. One of my reminiscences was seeing him carried along Princes Street, smiling and bowing as he passed through the hilarious crowd.

While Lord Advocate, Mr Murray was knighted, at which time I was acquainted with him, as well as afterwards when he was promoted to the bench as Lord Murray. Few persons connected with art, science, or literature in Edinburgh, escaped being acquainted with this marvellously genial person. His qualities were good-nature, love of humour, and particularly a love of pleasant society in his new home, a large and splendid dwelling in Great Stuart Street, with an outlook behind to the picturesque dell of the Water of Leith. The dinners which Lord Murray gave were exceedingly tasteful, that being seemingly with him a matter of deep consideration. There was usually one dish of some kind or other which he confidentially recommended to his guests as specially deserving of their attention. This pet dish was doubtless very costly, for it was seen nowhere else.

Lord Murray considered eating to be a high art, of which people generally were too neglectful. 'For instance,' he used to say, 'not one man in fifty appears to know that mutton chops to be of any value must be eaten the moment they are taken from the fire.' To verify this maxim, I understood he had a place fitted up in his kitchen, where chops could be instantaneously transferred from the gridiron to his plate, such as is seen in certain large London restaurants. Lord Murray was equally skilled in his wines. There was always some bottle declared to be matchless, and it was handled with as great delicacy, by the butler who had it in charge, as if it had been a new-born babe. In short, to gourmets of every variety Lord Murray's dinner-parties were unrivalled. Quietly conducted, and interspersed with exhilarating conversation, they were exactly what ceremonious dinner-parties ought to be, and often are not.

At these dinners, Lady Murray presided; and Mr Murray of Henderland, who lived in the house, *en garçon*, with his own livery servant, was usually present. Among the guests you might calculate on seeing two or three lawyers of the party to which Lord Murray

belonged. I pretty often saw Henry Cockburn, author of *Memorials of his Time*, which is about the most amusing book of biographic sketches that has appeared in the present century; also Andrew Rutherford, Lord Advocate, to whom, I believe, is due that important legislative Act that abolished the odious privileges once claimed by members of corporations in burghs. Cockburn was an agreeable and facetious companion, besides being an acute member of the Bar. He had no affectation in speaking—did not mince his words. In handling witnesses of a humble class, he spoke to them familiarly in their own language—it might be in the broadest Scotch—and thus secured some important evidence which the flashiest orator would have failed to elicit. Among the guests were ordinarily two or three ladies—not belles of the ballroom, but sensible middle-aged women, accomplished in music, languages, or literature.

At one of these dinner-parties, I had the pleasure of sitting beside a lady who had become locally famous. This was Miss Stirling Graham of Duntrune, an estate in Forfarshire, where she usually lived, but spent her winters in Edinburgh. Moving about at evening parties among the lite-

rati and more eminent lawyers, Miss Stirling Graham, by her original humour and tact, may be said to have kept the town in a pleasant kind of buzz. Nature seemed to have designed her to be an actress. She possessed the power of simulation to a degree almost unexampled; also the powers of an improvisatrice which have been very rarely excelled. Her wit and her personations, however, were always exclusively employed to promote harmless mirth among her select acquaintances. She was great in personifying and mimicking old Scottish ladies, or indeed Scottish women in the humbler ranks of life, for which her acute observation of character and her knowledge of the vernacular tongue particularly qualified her.

At the solicitation of friends, Miss Graham gave an account of her principal personations, which was printed for private distribution, and afterwards published, under the title of *Mystifications*. One of her best known mystifications was that of deceiving Mr Jeffrey, the eminent practising lawyer, by calling upon him as Lady Pitlyal, to consult him regarding some property on which she said she had a claim.

On conversing with this gifted lady, she spoke of the great services of Burns in writing songs

that could be sung to the old Scottish melodies, and regretted that some beautiful airs still remained to be allied to words consistent with good taste. I agreed with her; but when shall we have a second Burns?

If the dinners at Lord Murray's were a treat, his evening parties were more so. The suite of drawing-rooms, well lighted up, were filled with a select company of ladies and gentlemen, the pick of Edinburgh society. Lady Murray was an accomplished pianiste, and her musical parties usually comprehended some famous players on the flute and harp. I heard it whispered that her ladyship's apparently fanatical love of the piano arose partly from a desire to drown the recollections of a sad bereavement, that of her only child, a boy of great promise. The loss, it was hinted, had also greatly affected Lord Murray, who never afterwards quite recovered his hopeful buoyancy of spirit. Be this as it may, the evening parties were particularly enjoyable. I remarked that all round the lower part of the drawing-room, there were shelves with rows of handsomely bound books, mostly the works of French and Italian poets and dramatists. Lord Murray and his brother were excellent linguists, and they

frequently had distinguished foreigners or noted teachers of French at their evening parties.

This taste led to a species of entertainment not at all common. It consisted in getting some accomplished French teacher to give characteristic readings in the works of Molière, or other French dramatists. In these performances, the reader occupied a kind of rostrum at the corner of the front drawing-room. One evening, I particularly remember a clever reading of that comical drama, that for four hundred years has kept its place upon the French stage, entitled *L'Avocat Patelin*, in which frequently occurs the phrase, '*Revenez à vos moutons.*'

The plot turns upon a strange confusion of ideas. Patelin, a lawyer not in good circumstances, imposes on Guillaume, a draper, by getting from him six ells of cloth for a dress, at the price of thirty crowns, which he does not pay for. At the same time, Guillaume accuses his shepherd of having stolen and sold twenty-six of his sheep, and brings him for punishment before a judge. Patelin the lawyer contrives to get himself appointed advocate for the shepherd, whom he advises to act the part of an idiot, and when interrogated, to say nothing but 'Baa!'

The sight of Patelin in court drives Guillaume frantic, and in making his complaint as regards the stealing of the sheep, he mixes it up with the loss of six ells of cloth at the value of thirty crowns, in a manner totally incomprehensible to the judge, who tries to procure some information from the shepherd on the subject, but all he can get from him is 'Baa!' Turning to Guillaume, he says to him: 'You have come here to complain of sheep being stolen from you, and you speak of being cheated of six ells of cloth; I beg you will return to your sheep' (*revenez à vos moutons*). No remonstrance is of any avail; Guillaume continues to jumble up the two losses. The judge, in despair, asserts that no court in the kingdom could understand such a case, and at length dismisses it, leaving the unfortunate draper no redress either for the loss of his sheep or his cloth. The poor man quits the court in a transport of indignation, declaring, not without some degree of truth, that it is '*Un jugement inique*.'

In the reading of this droll farce, the simulated language of the speaker was excellent; while the audience entered into the spirit of the thing, and rewarded him with cheers and roars of laughter. These evening parties have left a very pleas-

urable impression on me. They showed what could be done within private society to promote harmless amusement and make time pass away agreeably. Lord Murray remains one of the most precious of my reminiscences. He was not a mere gourmet, but did many generous acts towards persons who required his assistance.

At Lord Murray's, I became acquainted with Lord Dunfermline, who had as James Abercromby been for a time a member of parliament for the city of Edinburgh, and was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons in 1835. On his resignation of the Speakership in 1839, he was raised to the peerage as Lord Dunfermline, and now he lived in retirement at Colinton House, a pleasant rural residence, about four miles to the west of Edinburgh. In his conversation he was calm, shrewd, and intelligent. I felt some interest in being acquainted with him, on account of his descent. He was the third son of that distinguished soldier, Sir Ralph Abercromby, who gained the victory over the French at Alexandria, 21st March 1801, but was severely wounded, and died a few days afterwards.

I frequently saw Lord Dunfermline, when he presided at public meetings connected with some



useful object, and through that means there arose an intimacy betwixt us. On one occasion, he invited me, along with my brother, to dinner at Colinton House. We went, and were agreeably entertained. At one end of the drawing-room, I noticed a large and sumptuous arm-chair placed on a slightly raised platform, and fit to be the throne of a sovereign. I asked him if there was anything particular about the history of the chair, and in reply, he said, that it was the chair he had used as Speaker of the House of Commons ; it being the custom for every Speaker, on his retiring from office, to take his chair with him, and keep it as a memorial. This worthy man died in 1858.

I somehow became acquainted with several members of that limited but respectable body in Edinburgh, the Society of Friends, who mostly lived in the southern suburbs of the city ; each family having its own commodious villa, with garden in the front and the rear. I think it was due to the absence of sectarian asperity in the *Journal*, along with my adhesion to free-trade doctrines, that I enjoyed the acquaintance of this small community of Quakers. There was something peculiarly delightful in the placidity of

manner of these people. The family that I knew best was that of John Wigham, Junior. Though designated 'Junior,' he was in reality an old man, and often took a prominent part in public meetings connected with the abolition of slavery, and such-like subjects. Mrs Wigham was a gentle, lady-like person. The manner in which I was usually received by the family was touching in its simplicity: 'Come in, William Chambers; we are glad to see thee.' Nothing could be more friendly.

In the conversations that took place, there was a studied abstinence from all disagreeable topics. The ecclesiastical rivalries and squabbles that agitated a large portion of society were never spoken of. The members of the family seemed to live in an atmosphere of perfect composure. All matters treated of bore reference to something practically good, connected with social progress. A visit to their house was as soothing as a perusal of the fifth chapter of Matthew. I always came away the better for what I saw and heard. On one occasion, I attended a kind of public breakfast given by the family in honour of Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, who interested the assembled guests with

a variety of details concerning slavery, and the condition of the coloured population in the United States.

In the small evening tea-parties given by this excellent family, I often met with Elihu Burritt, a native, I believe, of Connecticut, and who was generally known as the learned blacksmith. Burritt was a species of fanatic, with one predominant idea, which was, to agitate in England and America for what he somewhat oddly called 'the ocean penny post,' meaning by that, the charge of only a penny for the transmission of letters across the Atlantic, so that, at the utmost, the postage of an ordinary letter to or from the United States would be only threepence. I should think that Burritt laboured from eight to ten years to promote his favourite scheme of the 'ocean penny post.' I hope he lived to see the realisation of more than what he aimed at, for at present, by the postal union, the postage of a letter between any part of the United States and Great Britain is only twopence-halfpenny. All honour to the memory of Elihu Burritt. Within my recollection, there was great need for the persevering endeavours of such enthusiasts.

Among my other noted acquaintances in

Edinburgh, during middle life, all of whom have unfortunately passed away, were Dr John Hill Burton, author of the *History of Scotland*, and other works; Mr David Laing, an eminent antiquary; Mr Robert Cox (a nephew of the Combes), author of a critical work on the Sabbath; the Very Reverend Dean Ramsay, author of that amusing work, *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*; and Mr Charles Maclaren, the amiable and accomplished editor of the *Scotsman*, with whom I had the pleasure of making an excursion among the extinct volcanoes of Auvergne, and of visiting Gergovia, near Clermont, the desolate mountain site of what had been a fortified city, heroically defended by a tribe of Gauls against the overpowering conquest of Julius Cæsar with his Roman legionaries.

To this list of deceased intimates is to be added Robert Macfarlane, a lively and obliging person, who became a judge under the title of Lord Ormidale. I formed his acquaintance in a very curious way. It was by working together in preparing a public petition to the Magistrates and Council, praying that they would elect Francis Jeffrey to be member of parliament for the city. This was some time preceding

the passing of the Reform Bill, when society was in a very perturbed condition. It fell to my lot to carry the petition, which resembled a web a foot in thickness, on my shoulder, up the High Street, and to place it on the table of the Council, where it rolled out like a long stream, to the merriment of the onlookers (3d May 1831). As is well known, the petition was unavailing, Mr Robert Adam Dundas being elected member, a circumstance, I regret to say, which was followed by some serious rioting, that could not be allayed without the interposition of the military.

One of my acquaintances in 1836, and a few years later, and who, I am glad to say, still survives, was Mr Alexander Ireland, who had considerable literary taste. Robert Cox, my brother Robert, and he, formed a trio of congenial tastes and sentiments. Ireland was an exquisite player on the German flute, and I had him often at my evening parties, when he obligingly helped to entertain the company with his instrument. His playing of some of the Scottish airs was particularly excellent.

In 1843, Mr Ireland quitted Edinburgh to become a partner and business manager in the concern owning the *Manchester Examiner and*

*Times*, a newspaper which possesses a large circulation in the north of England. Latterly, I believe, he has retired from his active duties, and now lives at Bowden, in Cheshire.

Among a few melancholy but interesting reminiscences is that of receiving a visit from Thomas Hood, distinguished not only as a humorist, but as a serious poet. It was towards the end of his days, about 1843, when he came to Edinburgh, and spent a few hours in the evening with me. At this time he was pale, thin, and emaciated, but retained his liveliness of manner, and smartness of repartee. He spoke of the *Journal*, and of its wonderful success; hoped I would permit him to visit the printing-office of W. & R. C. Next morning, I escorted him over the establishment, in which about a dozen printing-machines were at work.

He was surprised to find that the sheets of the *Journal* pouring from the press were dated more than a fortnight in advance; whereupon I explained that every number of the *Journal* was made up, stereotyped, and put to press, at least three weeks in advance, in order that the large number would be printed in good time to be despatched in parcels to all parts of the United

Kingdom, ready for the day of publication. He said the obligation to exercise such foresight would drive him mad. This was the last time I saw poor Hood. He died in May 1845. I feel it to have been a matter of gratulation that I should have had these interviews with the author of *Eugene Aram's Dream*, *Song of the Shirt*, and *Bridge of Sighs*, such being among the most perfect poems of their kind in the English language.

Shortly after being visited by Hood, I had the pleasure of receiving a visit from a remarkable veteran in literature. This was James Augustus St John, who resided habitually in London. He dined and spent the evening with me, and from him there was a continual flow of interesting observations. Mr St John was chiefly known for his works on Egypt and Nubia, in which countries he had travelled. I was struck with the circumstance that he seemed to be more than a superficial traveller in these Eastern countries; he had apparently so mastered the thoughts, customs, and superstitions of the people among whom he had resided, as to have in some sort identified himself with them.

Cairo had, in a sense, overpowered his imagina-

tion. As yet, that ancient city remained very much what it was as described in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, consisting of narrow lanes and dwellings, within court-yards surrounded by high walls, in truly Eastern fashion. While residing in these court-yard dwellings, where everything that struck his eye had the air of a weird antiquity, he would not have been greatly surprised to be told that a 'Jin' had his haunt in the draw-well, and exercised a magical influence over the inhabitants. He told this quite seriously, and I considered that his confessions offered a curious instance of the manner in which a susceptible mind may be influenced by surrounding circumstances. Mr St John was the father of a family noted for genius in different departments of literature. With two of his sons, Percy B. St John and Bayle St John, I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted in Paris.

#### VISIT TO THE NETHERLANDS, ETC.

With the view of procuring distinct knowledge respecting the system of elementary education in the Netherlands, which was reputed to be singularly unsectarian, yet satisfactory to all parties, I



made a deliberate tour through that country in 1838, everywhere visiting schools in my route, and bringing away a stock of information on the subject, which was published on my return home.

The leading fact disclosed by my investigations was, that in the elementary schools sustained by the state, the secular was completely distinct from the religious education of the children. While the secular department was under the authorised teachers, the religious was conducted by the clergymen of the congregations to which the pupils respectively belonged ; the one part did not interfere with the other ; wherefore I found the children of Jews, and Christians of different denominations, sitting in the same class, happily with the best results. From what I saw, I took a warm interest in the establishment of the United Industrial School in Edinburgh, in which these principles of toleration and fair-play were successfully introduced. It is gratifying for me to know that the system of elementary education now introduced into Great Britain, appears to possess some of the important qualities which I found in full operation in the schools of Holland.

Looking back to this period, I have reminis-

cences of an acquaintanceship with Lord Kinnaird, whom I had the pleasure of visiting, by invitation, on two separate occasions at his beautiful residence, Rossie Priory, in the Carse of Gowrie. At these visits, I met select parties of noble and scientific persons, from whose conversation much was to be learned and appreciated. On one of these occasions, the principal scientific guest was Sir David Brewster, under whose kindly directions, some experiments in optics and photography were made for the amusement of the company.

Having written a number of articles on the subject of Emigration, I felt considerable interest in the operations of the New Zealand Land Company, which proposed to colonise New Zealand on a plan somewhat resembling the New England settlements in the seventeenth century; one settlement to be for members of the Church of England, another for Scotch Presbyterians, and so on. While on a visit to London, I procured some information on the subject from Mr Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a leading spirit in the Company's affairs. In the district set aside for the reception of Scotch settlers, it was arranged that the name of the chief town was, by way of attrac-

tiveness, to be New Edinburgh. It was no business of mine what they called the town; but, without damage to the plan, I thought an improvement might be suggested, which I did as follows, in a letter to the editor of the *New Zealand Journal*, published in London, November 11, 1843: 'If not finally resolved upon, I would strongly recommend a reconsideration of the name New Edinburgh, and the adoption of another infinitely superior, and yet equally allied to "Old Edinburgh." I mean the assumption of the name Dunedin, which is the ancient Celtic appellation of Edinburgh, and is now occasionally applied, in poetic composition and otherwise, to the northern metropolis. I would, at all events, hope that the names of places with the prefix "New" should be sparingly had recourse to. The "News" in North America are an abomination, which it has lately been proposed to sweep out of the country. It will be matter for regret if the New Zealand Company help to carry the nuisance to the territories with which it is concerned.'

The letter bore my signature—for I have made a point of never writing an anonymous letter—and the hint was taken. The name New

Edinburgh was changed to Dunedin, which it now bears. On a late occasion, September 1880, I received a complimentary letter from the Municipal Council of Dunedin which bore an interesting reference to the circumstance. It should be added, that the plan of settlement in New Zealand according to ecclesiastical distinctions, has been long since, and very properly, abandoned.

#### LONDON ACQUAINTANCES.

From this time, business transactions took me frequently to London, where I enjoyed the acquaintance of Richard Cobden, Sir James Kaye Shuttleworth, Sir James Clark, Dr Neil Arnott, David Roberts, R.A., Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, Charles Knight, the Rev. Sydney Smith, Samuel Rogers, and others. At the house of Sir James Clark, Bart., first in Hanover Street, Hanover Square, and afterwards in Brook Street, I was a frequent visitor. I may say the same thing of the house of Dr Neil Arnott in Bedford Square. At both, there were particularly choice parties, literary and scientific.

Sir James Clark had lived a good deal abroad, before settling down in London as a physician

to the Royal Family, and his conversation abounded in intelligent remarks regarding foreign society. He expressed himself much pleased with my published account of the tolerant and satisfactory method of elementary education in the Netherlands, and I believe it was to that cause I owed so much of his friendship. Lady Clark was equally agreeable and unaffected in manner. Both retained their Scotch intonation and phraseology, and both are warmly treasured in my reminiscences.

Two of my old London acquaintances, Mr Edwin Chadwick, C.B., and Mr John Bright, M.P., still survive. One morning, when calling on Mr Bright, I saw, for the first and last time, Francis Place, an eminent Radical of the early part of the present century, and whom I had often heard of, as a somewhat extraordinary character. It was he, I believe, who in the agony of the Reform Bill agitation, during the administration of the Duke of Wellington, is alleged to have brought about the political crisis, by one morning plastering the walls of the Metropolis with large placards bearing the words, 'Go for gold, and stop the Duke.' The effect was instantaneous by a run on the banks, and within a few hours, upwards

of half a million of gold was drawn from the Bank of England. That settled matters. Earl Grey was sent for. It was amusing for me to see and speak to the placid old man who was said to have been intimately concerned in this strange, and I must say somewhat irregular, affair.

The manner in which I became acquainted with Sydney Smith is too remarkable to be omitted. In 1844, when residing in Greek Street, Soho, one day about noon a carriage drives up to the door; not a vehicle of the light modern sort, but an old family coach, drawn by a pair of sleek horses. From it descends an aged gentleman, who, from his shovel hat and black gaiters, is seen to be an ecclesiastical dignitary. I overhear, by the voices at the door, that I am asked for. 'Who in all the world can this be?' A few minutes solve the question. Heavy footsteps are heard deliberately ascending the antique balustraded stair. My unknown visitor is ushered in—his name announced: 'The Rev. Sydney Smith.' I hasten to receive so celebrated a personage as is befitting, and express the pleasure I have in the unexpected visit—wondering how he had discovered me.

'I heard at Rogers's, you were in town,' said

he, 'and was resolved to call. Let us sit down and have a talk.'

We drew towards the fire, for the day was cold, and he continued: 'You are surprised possibly at my visit. There is nothing at all strange about it. The originator of the *Edinburgh Review* has come to see the originator of the *Edinburgh Journal*.'

I felt honoured by the remark, and delighted beyond measure with the good-natured and unceremonious observations which my visitor made on a variety of subjects. We talked of Edinburgh, and I asked him where he had lived. He said it was in Buccleuch Place, not far from Jeffrey, with an outlook behind to the Meadows. 'Ah!' he remarked, 'what charming walks I had about Arthur's Seat, with the clear mountain air blowing in one's face. I often think of that glorious scene.' I alluded to the cluster of young men—Jeffrey, Horner, Brougham, himself, and one or two others, who had been concerned in commencing the *Review* in 1802. Of these he spoke with most affection of Horner; and specified one who, from his vanity and eccentricities, could not be trusted. Great secrecy, he said, had to be employed in conducting the undertaking; and

this agrees with what Lord Jeffrey told my brother. My reverend and facetious visitor made some little inquiry about my own early efforts; and he laughed when I reminded him of a jocularity of his own about studying on a little oatmeal—for that would have applied literally to my brother and to myself.

There was some more chat of this kind, and we parted. This interview led to a few days of agreeable intercourse with Sydney Smith. By invitation, I went next morning to his house in Green Street, Grosvenor Square, to breakfast; and the day following, went with him to breakfast with a select party, which included my old and valued friend, Mr Robert Carruthers of Inverness, now deceased, at the mansion of Samuel Rogers, St James's, when there ensued a stream of witticisms and repartees for pretty nearly a couple of hours. This was assuredly the most pleasant conversational treat I ever experienced. On quitting London, I bade good-bye to Sydney Smith with extreme regret. We never met again. He died in February the following year.

There were two lady authoresses by whose acquaintanceship I felt honoured; each remark-



able for delicacy of taste, discrimination of character, and facility of description, with a keen sense of humour. The first of these to be mentioned was Mrs Anna Maria Hall, the wife of Mr S. C. Hall. Of English parentage, but born and educated in Ireland, Mrs Hall was essentially Irish in her vivacity, and geniality of disposition. She wrote for us a large number of Stories of the Irish Peasantry, each with a distinct moral purpose, that were much appreciated by the readers of *Chambers's Journal*, of which she was always an acceptable contributor. She resided with her husband at a pretty villa, called the Rosary, at Brompton; and there, every time I was in London, I was happy in making occasional visits.

The other lady authoress I have just referred to was Miss Mitford, who lived at a pleasant roadside cottage, environed by flowers and shrubs, in the neighbourhood of Reading, Berkshire. It was a short run by rail from London, and at every opportunity, I paid a visit to this charming old lady. In her character, she was a matchless specimen of a well-educated Englishwoman, correct in taste and feeling, clever and self-reliant. As a describer of rural life and scenery in their

happiest and most genial aspects, she is allowed to have been unrivalled. Although considerably advanced in life, she had the liveliness and winning manners of a child. Some women never seem to grow old, and she was one of them. Her tongue ran on so incessantly concerning the details of village life, that each of my visits might have afforded the materials of a popular article. Short in stature, with a tall, gold-headed cane in hand, she invited me to walk with her through the green lanes in the neighbourhood; the trees, wild-flowers, and birds, offering objects of garrulous remark at every step. She was not the least reticent regarding her own history.

She told me how she had been thrown, ever since girlhood, on her own resources, through her father, Dr Mitford's singular indiscretion and extravagance. He had spent a fortune, and even squandered twenty thousand pounds, the proceeds of a prize in the lottery. After all was gone, he had to depend on the industry of his daughter, who supported him with her pen. I have known several cases of fathers oppressing children by their heedless misconduct, but never one so bad as this. By a thriftless parent, who preyed on his daughter's sense of filial duty, she was con-

demned to celibacy, and endured a struggle for existence in her old age. Yet, she was ever cheerful, and resigned to her position. Her works will always be prized as among the most precious in English literature.

There was another and younger lady authoress who furnished many contributions to the *Journal*, and whom I saw frequently in London; this was Miss Camilla Toulmin, a writer of great versatility of talent, and poetic fancy. Depending entirely on her pen, the quantity of work she got through was extraordinary. This lady still survives, and though married, and known as Mrs Newton Crosland, she, to a certain extent, continues her literary career—from first to last a meritorious instance of tasteful and patient industry.

#### A VISIT TO PARIS.

I had visited France several times: to see the prison discipline at Roquette and Fontevrault; to see Voisin's method of rousing the dormant intellect of imbecile children at the Bicêtre; to visit the Juvenile Reformatory at Mettray, and so on. I again visited the country in 1849, during the Republic which ensued after the abdication

of Louis-Philippe; on this occasion, remaining longer than usual in Paris, and seeing more of the domestic life of the people. For this let me acknowledge myself indebted to the Dowager Countess of Elgin—a Scottish lady, of the Oswalds of Dunnikier—who by some means found me out in lodgings I had secured in the Rue de Helder, No. 2, with a splendid outlook on the Boulevard des Italiens. On several occasions, I visited the Countess at her mansion in the neighbourhood of the Rue de Bac, on the south side of the Seine, and which had been a palace of some pretension in the days of the old monarchy. Here she introduced me to her two accomplished daughters, one of whom, Lady Augusta Bruce, was subsequently married to the Very Reverend Dr Stanley, Dean of Westminster.

The evening parties of the Countess, composed of a mixture of English and French, were quiet, simple, and effective. There was no parade or finery; the numerous guests, lounging about the floor of a large saloon, or seated on sofas, having their enjoyment in conversation. There was no other festive entertainment than a cup of tea; and as no one seemed to attend with the view of eating and drinking, this was apparently sufficient

—the whole thing forming a singular contrast to the extravagant doings of Swelldom which one occasionally sees in England. At these parties, I met persons of distinction connected with the government, among whom I may mention M. Lamartine and M. Léon Faucher. Lamartine, with his tall, elegant figure, and composed manner, was, I think, the most remarkable man I was ever introduced to, or conversed with. I spoke to him, and complimented him on his wonderfully beautiful work, the *Voyage en Orient*—Travels in the East—which had been translated for circulation in England. M. Léon Faucher was greatly more conversable. He inquired into and was interested in our system of poor-laws, municipal government, and other topics connected with social economy, on which I did my best to give him some information.

On one of these evenings, I was introduced to a young Frenchman, son of a noted revolutionist during the Reign of Terror, who had afterwards saved his life by hiding himself, and changing his name, until he could again appear publicly. He had recently died, and his whole effects were about to be sold, in order that the proceeds might be equally divided among his family. The articles

were said to be curious ; and such I found to be the case, on going to see them in an old dignified mansion, near the Temple. To the antique furniture, I paid little attention ; my interest was concentrated in a large saloon, containing a billiard-table, on which were spread out for inspection a large variety of small articles, along with some old books and papers that were deemed historically precious. My attention became riveted on an open sheet of paper, with the identical proclamation which Robespierre had begun to write at the Hôtel de Ville, when his assailants burst in on him, and he was shot through the jaw. He had got only the length of scrawling the words, 'Courage, mes compatriotes,' when, being struck, the pen fell from his hand, and big drops of blood were scattered over the paper. Bearing these marks of discoloration, how strange a memorial of the horrors of 1794 ! I said to the young gentleman, who claimed an interest in the property, that if the articles were sent to be disposed of by public auction in London, they would certainly bring a larger price than if sold in Paris. To this hint, he bowed, but made no remark. I presume the collection was sold shortly afterwards.

To show me the way to this ancient out-of-the-way mansion, I was obligingly accompanied by my friend, Mr Mackellar Robertson, a Scotchman settled in Paris, in a street near the Port St-Denis, from whom I experienced numerous acts of hospitality, and who was untiring in his friendly attentions to his countrymen. His residence, forming a commodious and prettily furnished *étage*; also his wife, Madame Robertson; and a young lady cousin, along with their pet dog, Buck, a variety of Skye terrier, of great sagacity, and affectionate disposition, are printed indelibly on my memory. The group was unique. All are now dead and gone. The faithful Buck attended the funeral of each member of the family in succession. When the last had disappeared, he lay down in an agony of despair, and with a mournful cry, which spoke the depth of his emotion, expired. It was a striking instance of the attachment of the dog to those who had been kind to him, and whom he loved. No one will say that dogs do not sometimes die of a broken heart!

In the course of a conversation with Mr Robertson concerning the political condition of France, I said I could not recollect having anywhere seen

how the post-letters in Paris were delivered, if delivered at all, on the days when fighting took place in the streets, and cannon were firing at the barricades set up by revolutionists; that I did not quite understand how the postmen managed on these occasions. In reply, I learned that on such occasions, the postmen, in the execution of their duty, ordinarily went their rounds as usual; that when they came to a place where there was desperate fighting, they took refuge for a few minutes in a doorway or common-stair, until the volley was fired, and then resumed their perambulations; that these Frenchmen, in fact, encountered dangers of this sort with marvellous bravery, though often running extraordinary risks. One day, in which the fighting had been very severe on the adjacent Boulevard, the postman arrived with letters, and pointing to a round hole, which had been made by a bullet in passing through his hat, only jocularly remarked that it was *fort drôle*. Had the bullet passed a little lower, the poor fellow must have been shot dead, an innocent victim of revolutionary violence.

The courtesies I received from the Countess of Elgin during my visit to Paris in 1849, have left very agreeable reminiscences. This much



respected lady died in 1860. As regards the general appearance of affairs, I could see that things were in a most unsettled condition. At times, I expected some public disorder, and almost wished myself safe in England. The streets were frequently thronged with long lines of National Guards, shouting and singing, and with flowers fantastically stuck on the ends of their muskets. They seemed to me troops under no proper control, and in a state of semi-mental derangement. Looking out on the Boulevards at scenes of this description, I felt that a crisis of some sort could not be long postponed. The *coup d'état* and assumption of despotic power by Napoleon III. did not at all surprise me. A tyrannical despotism has in all ages been the natural sequence of impending anarchy.

## EXCURSIONS IN ENGLAND.

At different times in the course of years, I made excursions through England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, either for the purpose of visiting friends, or for gathering materials for *Journal* articles concerning the more interesting scenes and circumstances that came under notice.

I can here indicate only a few of the places and persons I visited. Twice I went to Allanheads, in Northumberland, to visit Mr Thomas Sopwith, superintendent of Mr Beaumont's celebrated lead-mines, and who was an intimate acquaintance of my brother. The route taken was by the railway that stretches from Carlisle to Newcastle-on-Tyne, and which here and there affords glimpses of the site of the ancient Roman Wall that extended across the country from the Solway to the Tyne. I stopped at a certain station on the line, and pursued the rest of the journey by a carriage that was waiting for me.

Mr Sopwith was an enthusiastic geologist, was skilled in the engineering of mines, and, possessing much general knowledge of a practical kind, might almost be called a universal genius. He was, I believe, a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and his speech had a strong flavour of the 'burr.' Having been bred a cabinetmaker, he was skilled in fabricating articles of furniture, and various kinds of models in wood. He showed me a writing-table of his own invention; it comprehended a desk and drawers, the whole of which could be opened or locked by a single movement. Some of his models were of much

practical value. They represented the dislocations of strata that are found in coal and other mines, and showed how, by working in a certain direction, the lost stratum might be recovered.

With a good knowledge of geometry, Mr Sopwith was great in isometrical drawing. He could execute as readily a faithful sketch of a house and grounds, from an imaginary point in the atmosphere—say three hundred feet up—as from the surface of the earth, near at hand. He was likewise clever in taking pen-and-ink sketches of his friends; one that he had executed of Dr Buckland in his travelling garb as a geologist, was true to the life. Mr Sopwith was indefatigable in his efforts to amuse his guests. He would tell no end of jocular stories, read passages from some amusing book, and when conversation seemed to flag, he would turn aside to a pianoforte, on which he would play some interesting tune, accompanied by appropriate words. One of his droll songs was that of 'The Newcastle Collier,' which he gave in the characteristic vernacular.

His industry was untiring. He kept a diary or record, descriptive of all he saw wherever he went. This diary was not merely brief notes, in the usual diary fashion, but consisted of a delibe-

rate account of what fell under his notice, correctly written out, as if ready for the press. Here and there, it was embellished by pen-and-ink drawings of the more remarkable individuals he had met with. When I saw this diary, it extended to at least thirty small volumes, bound in vellum, and was so tastefully written, that there was no difficulty in reading it. I have no doubt that many more volumes were added to the number, narrating new scenes and circumstances.

He directed my attention to one of the volumes describing a family calamity of a very extraordinary kind, and of which he frequently spoke. It was the account of the terrible troubles he had had with a child of his first marriage. The mother, a most amiable person, died, leaving a son, Joseph, to be nursed by a foster-mother. A woman was unfortunately selected who turned out to be of a wild and irregular character. The result, according to the father's belief, was, that Joseph partook of the intractable character of the foster-mother; that his intellect and dispositions had been irretrievably ruined by this unhappy lactation. In youth, the boy was unmanageable, again and again ran away from school, and was not amenable to any species of discipline. The

strange feature of the case was, that every time the conduct of the poor boy was challenged, he expressed penitence, but declared he had acted under strong impulses that he could not withstand.

The father did everything in his power to advance the boy's interests in life, but in vain. His last escapade consisted in running away from a situation procured for him in the Netherlands, furtively returning to London, going to the office of a recruiting-sergeant in Westminster and entering himself as a recruit in the army. The wretched lad had no sooner committed this act, than he repented of it. But the die was cast. The father, on consideration, trusted that the irregularities of his son might possibly be cured by the rigorous discipline of the army, and allowed matters to take their course. As a parting admonition, he told Joseph, that on his first step on rising from the ranks by good behaviour, he would be bought off.

On these terms, the father and son parted. The regiment into which Joseph had enlisted was drafted to India. There, after a little time, this unfortunate lad caught a contagious fever, and died. The father felt the blow, but it was with a sigh of relief. In talking to Mr

Sopwith on this extraordinary case, I found that nothing could remove his settled conviction, that the milk of a bad foster-mother would ruin the best child that ever was born. His theory was, that a child at birth is not done with its mother, but that the connection properly remains until the nursing was over. Hence the importance of having, in case of necessity, a substitute, mental and bodily, resembling as nearly as possible the natural mother. I feel that the subject is worth the serious consideration of parents. After the lamented death of Joseph's mother, Mr Sopwith married again, and had a family, who were in all respects worthy of his regard.

One day, Mr Sopwith accompanied me on a visit to a lead-mine, to which the descent was by a long sloping passage. I had to be equipped in a particular dress, a lighted candle in one hand, and a stick in the other. In this guise, a sketch of me was made, as a memorial of my visit.

Mr Sopwith did valuable public service, by having, under government requirement, visited the wild district of country in Gloucestershire known as the Forest of Dean. There, at a sacrifice of much time and trouble, he adjusted the rival and complicated claims that had grown up

under acquired or assumed rights of property, by which and other means he succeeded in bringing good order out of a seemingly hopeless state of chaos. He explained these proceedings to me, which were vastly interesting, and formed the subject of a printed quarto volume. Mr Sopwith finally removed with his wife and family to Westminster, and there he died in January, 1879. His extensive diary would form the basis of a very interesting work.

Towards the end of 1849, I visited Sunderland, in obedience to a request, that I would preside at a public soirée of the Literary and Philosophical Society of that place. Of the meeting on that occasion, it is unnecessary to say anything, further than that the demonstration was eminently successful, and that I was treated with a degree of consideration much greater than was either expected or deserved. I was brought in contact with many intelligent minds, and all that took place revealed to me much kindness of feeling. Before my departure, I was courteously escorted to a number of interesting sights in the neighbourhood; in particular, I was invited to see a coal-mine at Monkwearmouth, which has the reputation of being the deepest pit in the world,

below the sea-level. The depth, I was informed, was eighteen hundred feet.

I accepted the invitation ; and having, in an adjoining cottage, equipped myself in a pitman's dress, with a leather cap on my head, like that of a London coal-heaver, I descended to the mine by the down-cast shaft. Seated in the crib, descent was so instantaneous, that it resembled a piece of jugglery. Arriving at the bottom, I was conducted, in one of a train of empty wagons, through a long tunnel, lighted with gas, to the face of the workings. The wagons were drawn by horses ; and the sight of the poor animals, condemned to live under ground, filled me with sorrowful feelings. I was told that they did not in the least pine for want of sunlight ; that, being well taken care of, they thrive in their new situation. Yet, I could not help feeling pity for the poor creatures.

Having arrived at the workings, I was brought in front of a beautiful seam of coal about five feet thick. There was apparently nothing defective with the ventilation, but the heat was oppressive. The temperature, as shown by a thermometer, was eighty-six and a half degrees. The men picking at the coal, and bringing it down in masses, were



nearly naked. I was told that I was in the heart of the great seam, which stretches for many miles, and is apparently inexhaustible. Wonderful, when contemplated as the transformation of a luxuriant vegetation that once flourished in the sunlight; and still more wonderful, when contemplated as a store of the richest fuel, prepared and set aside for our use by the hand of a bounteous Providence! I returned to the light of day by the up-cast shaft, much gratified by the spectacle.

Friendly to social progress, I took a warm interest in the National Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851. My contribution to the objects of art was of a trivial nature. It consisted of a small volume, printed in colours, and with various ornamental designs, as a specimen of what could be produced by the London press. The book was written for the occasion. It was entitled *Fiddy: an Autobiography*, and purported to be the history of a little dog, which I had owned for several years, and which, from its intelligence and gentleness, was a prodigious favourite in the dwelling. In writing the book, I endeavoured to frame what might be assumed to have been the feelings of the animal in the various circumstances in which it had been

placed. Only a few copies were printed, and these for private distribution. As a domestic favourite, Fiddy remains a tender reminiscence, and so does her successor, Fanny.

During my apprenticeship, while delivering a parcel of books at a house in Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, in 1815, I was accidentally mixed up with an infuriated mob, who smashed in the windows of the house of Sir John Marjoribanks, Bart., M.P., and Lord Provost of the city, who had rendered himself popularly offensive by sustaining the import taxes on corn. (The house was the most northerly on the west side.) That was my first experience of what were known as the Corn Laws. For years afterwards, these Corn Laws, in the form of sliding scales and otherwise, were a continual source of discord in the country; the landlord class generally insisting that corn of all sorts should be taxed on importation; while the middle and lower classes, who felt acutely the necessity for food being as cheap as possible, insisted as strenuously that the whole Corn Laws from top to bottom were an error, and that corn should be imported free of duty.

The end of the desperate struggle is well known. Sir Robert Peel, yielding to repre-

sentations on the subject, and now avowedly a convert to free-trade, carried a measure to put an end to the Corn Laws in 1846. I was present at a public evening meeting in Manchester that took place to celebrate the extinction of these odious statutes. The meeting did not break up till past midnight. When the clock struck twelve, which marked the close of the tax on corn, the whole audience rose to their feet, and uttered loud shouts of triumph and mutual congratulation. It was an interesting and memorable scene.

At the time I commenced the *Journal*, the duty on paper paid by the manufacturer was threepence per pound-weight, which formed a grievous burden on every sort of publication. About 1850, publishers generally began to make earnest efforts to get rid of this tax, which pressed with special cruelty on the cheaper class of works. In this movement, which on a lesser scale resembled the Corn Law agitation, I took a somewhat conspicuous part. There were good reasons for my doing so. The *Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts*, issued by W. and R. Chambers, and which extended to twenty shilling volumes, with a circulation of eighty thousand copies, was

absolutely choked to death by the tax. The anticipated profits on the work were literally nothing, for the whole had been absorbed by the duties on paper. The government, with no trouble or risk, having got all the profits on this popular little work, it was given up. Cases of this kind were impressed on the attention of the legislature. Mr Milner Gibson, M.P., zealously helped the movement, which was at length successful. The repeal of the paper-duty took effect on October 1, 1861. Already, in 1853, the advertisement duty, eighteenpence each, had been removed; and in 1855, the newspaper stamp was abolished; wherefore, with the abolition of the paper-duty, 1861, the press in all its departments was set thoroughly free from fiscal exactions. In these few facts, young people will learn how newspapers have been so wondrously cheapened and extended in circulation.

In my excursions in England, I became acquainted with two men, brothers, Sir Peter Fairbairn, and Sir William Fairbairn, Bart. I first knew Sir Peter, the younger of the two, who lived at Leeds, and was the head of a flourishing spinning concern. I had been invited to Leeds to attend a large popular gathering, and enjoying

his hospitality, formed an intimacy which lasted a number of years. Sir William, the elder brother, when I knew him, was the head of large manufacturing iron-works in Manchester. He was a peculiarly sedate and thoughtful person, with vast mental resources. He always called upon me when he came to Edinburgh, and I met him otherwise in the course of my rambles.

I speak of these Fairbairns, because they were both self-made men, and a credit to the country that produced them. They were natives of Kelso, and in their early life suffered severe privations, which they surmounted by indomitable perseverance and ingenuity. William began life as a mason's labourer, at the building of the new bridge at Kelso, after which his struggles to acquire knowledge to fit himself for the business of a mechanical engineer, are among the most extraordinary on record. He had his triumph and reward in at length rising to fortune, and in being associated with Robert Stephenson in the construction of the famous Britannia Bridge across the Menai Strait. The conception of making the bridge tubular, dependent upon the strength of iron, was allowed to be due to his genius, and for his service in this respect he was rewarded

with a baronetcy. Elsewhere, I have given an account of his marvellous character and career (*Stories of Remarkable Persons*). He died in 1874. What a world it would be, if young men placed in untoward circumstances were to take an example from William Fairbairn!

#### LATER TIMES.

In 1853, I crossed the Atlantic in a Cunard steamer, and visited Nova Scotia, Canada, and the United States, of which an account was afterwards published. What I saw of the growth of large cities, of vigorous manufacturing industries, and other evidences of prosperity in the States, was exceedingly gratifying. The kindly hospitality extended to me everywhere was heartily appreciated. By Franklin Pierce, then President of the United States, I was affably received at the White House. My brother, Robert, afterwards visited the States; he also made an excursion through Norway, and visited Iceland, of all which he wrote an account in the *Journal*.

With little to be thankful for as regards my treatment at school, I retained an affection for the place of my birth, and the picturesque hills

and dales that surround it. I occasionally visited the district, and was able to renew some old acquaintanceships in 1841, on the occasion of the civic authorities of Peebles presenting my brother and myself with the freedom of the town, at a public banquet given for the purpose.

My connection with the town and neighbourhood was further promoted by the purchase, in 1849, of Glenormiston, a pleasant property in the Vale of Tweed, parish of Innerleithen, and where I have ever since dwelt in summer and autumn, for the sake of the pure air and the recreation to be obtained on the spot. About the same period, I purchased back the house in Peebles in which I was born, of which my father had been mercilessly bereft, on the occurrence of his commercial disaster. In 1855, I helped, with some others in the neighbourhood, to establish railway communication with Edinburgh, an undertaking which has proved of great value to the inhabitants of the district.

Though I had visited Manchester several times, I visited it again in 1857, in order to see, and procure some particulars concerning, a stupendous workhouse that had been erected at Crumsall, for the Poor-law Guardians, by my friend Mr

Alexander W. Mills, architect of the Manchester Exchange. I certainly saw a building of extraordinary dimensions, with accommodation for eighteen hundred inmates, under proper classification. But prodigious as was what I saw, the establishment has recently been augmented by an infirmary, to accommodate fourteen hundred old, infirm, and sick persons. I regret not having space to give even a brief account of this remarkable exemplification in bricks and mortar of the English poor-law system, which, in some of its features, seems to amount to a kind of Socialism.

In 1859, I presented the community of Peebles with an Institution, designed for social and intellectual improvement, consisting of a Public Library of fifteen thousand volumes, a county Museum of Natural History, a Gallery of Art with classic models, a Reading Room, and a Hall for lectures and public assemblages. Though the gift has been seemingly prized, I should, after a lapse of twenty-two years, have some difficulty in saying whether its originally anticipated advantages have been, to any material extent, practically realised. At the Inauguration of the Institution, the town was for a week *en fête*. The proceedings were opened by a sermon and address, delivered by



the Rev. Dr Guthrie, to a crowded assemblage in the Hall. On the evening of one of the succeeding days, there was a concert, at which a number of poetical pieces, the composition of my old and ingenious acquaintance (now deceased), Mr James Ballantine of Edinburgh, author of the *Gaberlunzie's Wallet* and a volume of Scottish lyrics, were sung with musical accompaniments.

In the autumn of the same year, I attended the meeting of the Social Science Congress at Bradford, in Yorkshire. It was a large and successful assemblage. It took place in a spacious hall, with galleries rising tier above tier; and as regards accommodation, it deserves to be considered one of the finest things of the kind in England. With not a little consternation, on entering the town I observed, by large bills on the walls, that I was announced as one of the speakers—a circumstance wholly unexpected, for I have never put myself forward in this way, and did not clearly see what I had to say to a large miscellaneous assemblage. The meetings were presided over by Lord Brougham, and one of the more eminent speakers was the Earl of Shaftesbury. At the conclusion of the meeting, I visited Rochdale, to procure correct particulars respecting the

co-operative system, about which I afterwards wrote some articles for the *Journal*.

Passing over any account of visits to Germany and Switzerland, I was able, in the spring and summer of 1862, to fulfil a long desired wish to visit Italy. The journey was not easily performed, for there were still few railways. I had to begin by being dragged in a diligence, amidst the snow, across Mont Cenis; and there were other difficulties. But I was rewarded by the visit to Rome, Florence, Milan, Naples, Pompeii, and Vesuvius; of all which I gave an account in a volume entitled *Something of Italy*.

From 1862 to 1864, at intervals betwixt the writing of *Journal* articles, I occupied myself in preparing a history of my native county, which I had long contemplated. It was a department in literature I had not been accustomed to. Much of it consisted of digging into old records—the records of the Privy Council of Scotland, the records of Justiciary, burgh records, the records of presbyteries and kirk-sessions, and the records of private families; thence drawing to the light of day such facts as bore on the raids, fightings, feuds, slaughters, and other lively occurrences of the past.

Besides researches of this nature, I had to travel over the whole county, and take note of ancient British camps, and other objects of an archæological nature. For the purpose of taking sketches of old castles and gentlemen's seats, I was accompanied by a skilled draftsman. The work done occupied altogether more than two years, and terminated in the publication of a *History of Peeblesshire*, which, to speak frankly, though favourably received, did not nearly pay the expenses that were incurred, all my trouble going for nothing. The work had, however, afforded me much amusement, and I do not in the least regret having undertaken and completed it.

When this job was fairly out of hand, a new phase of life awaited me. In 1865, the citizens of Edinburgh were in want of a Lord Provost, and, to my surprise, fixed on me for the distinguished office. I had hitherto shrunk from taking any prominent part in public affairs; and on the present occasion only acceded to the general solicitations from a wish to promote, if possible, certain measures of social improvement. From a consideration of the state of large cities, I entertained the conviction, that the insalubrity,

the vice and misery, that prevail among the more abject classes, are traceable, in a great measure, to that inveterately wrong system of house construction which consists in narrow courts and alleys branching from the main thoroughfares.

I felt that if I could possibly obliterate, by legislation, the hideous resorts in these quarters, a good deed would be done. Hence, with the able assistance I received from Mr J. D. Marwick, town-clerk, and a small but faithful band of adherents, the Improvement Act of 1867. It is not for me to pronounce an opinion concerning this municipal measure. Taking up a London newspaper, I observe the following statement: 'No fewer than two thousand eight hundred unwholesome houses have been pulled down in Edinburgh since 1867, and over half a million have been spent since that year in city improvements. In 1863, the death-rate was twenty-six per thousand per annum; now it is twenty per thousand.'

Some time after entering on office, I was told it would be becoming in me, for the honour of the city, to be presented at Court. Acting on this very proper suggestion, I embraced the earliest opportunity of getting myself presented by Sir

George Grey, at a Levée held at the palace of St James', May 2, 1866; Her Majesty being represented on the occasion by the Prince of Wales. On going up the great staircase, I confess to being affected by a strange sensation. A recollection of my early struggles rushed across my memory. How strange the metamorphosis, from having been a penniless and unknown youth to being a full-blown dignitary arrayed in rich apparel, and wearing the robes and insignia of office. And lo! I was now about to be introduced to Royalty. Without presumption, could I help remembering the notable text in Scripture, which had similarly occurred to the mind of Benjamin Franklin? 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings.' The presentation went off with every mark of cordiality.

While at home, in the course of the same month (May 19), I had the honour of receiving at a ceremonial luncheon, His Royal Highness, Prince Alfred, along with a number of noble and distinguished guests, including Viscount Melville, the second Lord Dunfermline, and Lord Colonsay, President of the Court of Session. A public procession followed, amidst crowds of people, to

the National Museum of Science and Art, in Chambers Street. A few days later, Prince Alfred was created Duke of Edinburgh.

One of the duties of the Lord Provost, as is well known, is that of ceremoniously delivering a burgess ticket to distinguished strangers to whom the Magistrates and Council have voted the freedom of the city. It fell to my lot during my period of office to present this token of citizenship to several persons of eminence; among others to Lord Napier of Magdala; Mr John Bright, M.P.; and Mr Disraeli, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. The presentation to Mr Disraeli took place on the 30th October, 1867, in the presence of a very large concourse of citizens. On the previous day, he was entertained at a public banquet; on which occasion, in proposing the health of the Magistrates and good wishes to the city generally, Mr Disraeli was pleased to refer in terms so eulogistic to the literary operations in which I had been concerned, that I shrink from copying them from the newspapers of the day in which they appeared.

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh happens to be an ex-officio member of the Commission of Northern Lighthouses, a body invested with the

duty of managing all the lighthouses on the sea-coast of Scotland and Isle of Man. The Commissioners own a powerful and well-equipped steamer called the *Pharos*, employed on matters connected with the service ; and in which a select number of them make an excursion annually, with a view to inspection of a certain number of the lighthouses. On two occasions, I was elected to be one of the party. My first trip was in 1866, when I was taken along the west coast of Scotland, among the Outer Hebrides, and had an opportunity of visiting that wonderful triumph of art, the Skerryvore lighthouse, rising to the height of a hundred and fifty feet, up which I had the satisfaction of climbing to the top. This is one of my very marked reminiscences.

My second excursion, which took place in 1867, was along the east coast of Scotland, from the Firth of Forth and Bell Rock lighthouses, to the Orkney and Shetland Islands. Independently of the satisfaction of seeing these Islands under very advantageous circumstances, I had the pleasure of visiting the scenery described by Sir Walter Scott in his romance of the *Pirate*; a pleasure somewhat enhanced by the consideration that Scott had visited the Islands in circumstances

not unlike my own ; for his voyage was made in company with the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses in 1814. By way of amusement, I wrote an account of my two excursions in the *Pharos*, which appeared in the *Journal*, and was afterwards embodied in a small volume, entitled *My Holidays*, printed for private circulation.

A ceremonial duty of no small importance required attention in the summer of 1867. It was to head a deputation of eight persons, representing the corporation of Edinburgh, to unite with the corporations of London and Dublin in being present at the distribution of prizes at the International Exhibition in Paris, July 1. This was a very imposing affair. I took Mrs Chambers with me, and we lived almost in state, at the Hôtel Bristol, Place Vendôme.

The ceremonial took place in a spacious building in the Champs-Élysées. The Emperor Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugenie presided on the occasion. Before retiring, they walked round the spacious hall so near to us as to afford a good view of their persons. The Empress seemed to be a gentle, retiring being, and I mourn her misfortunes.

When, at the end of three years, my period of



office expired, I allowed myself to be re-elected for a second period, in order to effect, if possible, a particular and unexplained purpose. Although authorised by Parliament, the operation of the Improvement Act depended on the decision of the trustees, such being the members of the Town Council. In point of fact, in spite of all my exertions, the formation of certain new streets through dense and insalubrious neighbourhoods was abandoned. This I do not cease to regret; for had the Act been carried out in its integrity, the salubrity and the beauty of the city would have been considerably advanced, and the death-rate would have now been only fifteen, instead of twenty, per thousand per annum.

A proposed new thoroughfare, which is now known as Jeffrey Street, was still in doubt when I entered office the second time. I knew there was a party determined to prevent, if possible, the formation of the street. My object, on the contrary, was to get the street formed. I therefore returned to office to battle the point, under perhaps improved auspices. The tug of war came off on the 16th of July 1869, when I fortunately carried a motion to form the street in question. Having thus effected my object, I gave in my

resignation at the end of the first year, and was glad to retire into private life.

The quietude of later times, interspersed with occasional visits, for the sake of health, to the south of France, was painfully signalised by the decease of my lifelong coadjutor. Dr Robert Chambers died at St Andrews, in the spring of 1871, from what seemed to be a failure of nature, due to excessive mental exertion, leaving a family to mourn his loss. His Moral and Humorous Essays, written in his early strength and power of observation, gave a certain tone to the *Journal*, which, with other characteristics, the work, it may be hoped, will steadily maintain. His more elaborate works were the *Traditions of Edinburgh*; a *History of the Rebellion of 1745*, which has been very popular, and gone through a number of editions; the *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, 3 vols. 8vo; and the *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, 2 vols. 8vo, in which he was assisted by Mr R. Carruthers of Inverness. He edited the *Life and Works of Robert Burns*, in 4 vols., embracing much new and carefully collected matter, and which has passed through several editions. The profits of one of the editions were bestowed on Mrs Begg, a surviving sister of Burns, and her

daughters. My brother's last work was the *Book of Days*, 2 vols. 8vo, the execution of which, and the copious investigations required for it at the British Museum, no doubt contributed to his death-blow.

My own literary efforts in recent times have been confined chiefly to essays on subjects of social concern for the *Journal*. At intervals, I managed to write a few volumes, *Wintering at Mentone*, a result of experience in residing for two winters at that pleasant resort in the Riviera; a volume designated *France: its History and Revolutions*, intended for the instruction of youth, and which has passed through four editions; also *Ailie Gilroy*, a story founded on facts, written with the view to put young ladies on their guard against designing adventurers.

I likewise wrote a small volume descriptive of a visit to Welwyn, in Hertfordshire. At Sherrards, in the neighbourhood, I was the guest of Mr W. H. Wills, now deceased, and of his wife, my youngest sister, Janet. By these kind friends, I was enabled to undertake drives through a beautiful country in several directions, to see Hatfield, the princely seat of the Marquis of Salisbury; Panshanger, the seat of Earl Cowper,

renowned for its gallery of pictures; and the famed Abbey of St Albans, now in course of restoration. In the close vicinity of Sherrards, I felt much interest in visiting Brocket Hall, which is situated in the middle of a noble park, studded with old trees of huge dimensions. A small apartment on the ground-floor of the Hall is pointed out as that in which Lord Palmerston died in 1865.

My latest book of any moment has been the *Memoir of my brother Robert, with Autobiographic Sketches*, 1872. It has passed through eleven editions. I shall not expatiate on the number of works, designed to promote the cause of popular instruction, in which the firm has been from first to last engaged; it is sufficient to say that the whole have been of a character designed to impart useful knowledge in a familiar and agreeable form, and, if possible, to cultivate the moral and intellectual faculties of the people. They have, in reality, been a method of educating through the medium of the press. Political topics have been studiously avoided, or, more properly, left to the acknowledged organs of public opinion. So, likewise, matters of a religious nature have been resigned to their appropriate exponents;

while no less care has been exercised to exclude subjects or references calculated to wound sentiments of delicacy or propriety.

The operations in literary production by W. and R. Chambers have not been narrowed to a country or district, but have borne reference to the English-speaking race all over the globe; the consequence being that they are perhaps as well known in the United States and in the colonies as at our own doors. Our more laborious and crowning efforts in the cause of cheap and instructive literature have consisted in the execution of several series of school treatises; and also that now pretty well-known digest, *Chambers's Encyclopædia, a Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*, 10 vols. 8vo, of which the sale has been, and continues to be, very considerable.

Alike in editing *Chambers's Journal*, and in preparing the various works here indicated, we have been much indebted to a large body of contributors, and particularly to a succession of able literary assistants. The following names are worthy of being specially mentioned: Mr W. H. Wills, Mr Leitch Ritchie, and Mr James Payn, as having each, for a time, been acting editors of the

*Journal*; and Dr Andrew Findlater, as the erudite editor of *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

Nor can gratitude be withheld from those who have aided in conducting the business portions of the concern; I would more especially refer to Mr William Inglis, ever accurate, true, and faithful in presiding over the accounting department for the long period of fifty years, and who is now happily a member of the firm. Last, not least, thanks are due to the hundreds of skilful artisans, who, by good conduct, have helped to promote the stability of the firm. The agency set on foot in London at the commencement of the *Journal*, was, for sufficient reasons, eventually withdrawn, and in its stead a branch of the business was established in Paternoster Row, which has proved in all respects successful.

That, so far, closes my account. Obligated, by advanced age, and an infirm state of health, to live almost the life of a recluse, the more active professional duties connected with the conducting of the firm, along with the editing of the *Journal*, have for some years past been in the hands of my nephew, Mr R. Chambers, to whose services I have been much indebted.

## CONCLUSION.

In the proceedings connected with the Jubilee of *Chambers's Journal*, February 3, 1882, there were the most gratifying demonstrations of good feelings towards myself and the firm. From the publishers and booksellers in Edinburgh, I received a most flattering address, and was equally gratified by an address presented by the *employés* of the firm. Connected with this last-mentioned address, it appeared that there were in the employment of W. and R. Chambers, ten persons who had been in the office from forty to fifty years, ten from thirty to thirty-eight years, and eleven from twenty-four to twenty-nine years; and that a number of these individuals had sons or daughters in the office. The proceedings connected with the Jubilee were closed by a Soirée, held in a public hall, at which many friends of the firm were present, along with the whole of the workmen and members of their families. From the state of my health, I could not be present. My nephew ably presided.

At the risk of appearing to intrude private matters on the public ear, I may state that I was

married, in 1833, to the daughter of Mr John Clark, of Westminster, who still survives at an age corresponding to my own; and that I suffered the sad misfortune of losing all my children shortly after birth.

An incident never for a moment contemplated was the offer, by the University of Edinburgh, to confer on me the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, which was bestowed in a way too complimentary to be rejected or readily forgotten, in 1872. More lately, another species of honour came unexpectedly in my way. In June 1881, W. E. Gladstone, M.P. and Prime Minister, made an offer to me of a knighthood. This I respectfully declined.

I have now presented a sketch of the leading particulars of my long and busy life, also explained how *Chambers's Journal* originated, and what followed under the firm of W. and R. Chambers. Possibly, it may be thought I have been too precise in specifying the date and circumstances connected with the commencement of the *Journal*; but the singular confusion of ideas which seems to prevail on the subject must be my excuse. I see it constantly stated that the *Penny Magazine* preceded *Chambers's Journal* as



a cheap periodical, which is distinctly the reverse of the truth, and that papers of a greatly more recent growth were the pioneers of this species of literature. From what has been stated, it would be hard to determine what paper was the pioneer.

The true test, after all, is one of Endurance. The *Penny Magazine*, begun under the best auspices, fortified by the patronage of Brougham, eulogised by Reviews of a high class, and with much else in its favour, broke down and perished in fifteen years. Other cheap periodicals, most creditable in their aims, maintained their existence only twenty to thirty years, and many hundreds, I might say thousands, did not survive so long as a single year, or even so much as a single month. In considering these facts, I am surely entitled to point, with a degree of professional pride and satisfaction, to the length of days enjoyed by *Chambers's Journal*. With no special patronage from sect or party, or from any one of exalted station, and owing nothing whatever to Reviews, but depending exclusively on itself and on the broad public, it has reached its Jubilee of fifty years with a circulation larger than it had at any former period of

its career. This phenomenon of longevity might suggest some interesting inquiries and explanations, but it is perhaps resolvable by the single expression, Enduring Earnestness of Purpose, without which permanent success in any pursuit in life is impracticable.

Whether as a personal or bibliographic narrative, the present sketch is possibly not without interest, from its throwing a certain light on a branch of human knowledge. It has certainly been unaccompanied by brag or pretension, and is left to take its chance in sweeping along the great vista of Time. As has been already said, in the course of a long life the world has been prodigiously changed, and I am not unconscious of being changed with it. How long, with care, existence may be protracted, I am unable to say ; but be the period long or short, my feelings remain identified with *Chambers's Journal*, which it was my fortune to originate, and in the cherishing of which my literary efforts, such as they are, will not, at fitting opportunities, fail to be exerted.

One of my acts in later times, which I merely glance at for the sake of rounding off a too long narrative, has been the restoration of that fine,

old, historical monument, the Cathedral Church of St Giles, Edinburgh, which, for more than three hundred years, had been allowed to sink into a discreditable condition. The work is now considerably advanced, under the direction of a skilled architect, Mr W. Hay; and I trust that God may grant me life and sufficient health to complete the undertaking. I have, however, made arrangements to secure the completion of the works, in the event of my decease.

To the great number of friends who were looking forward to some sort of address from me on the occasion of the Jubilee of *Chambers's Journal*, I offer a cordial greeting.

W. CHAMBERS.

THE END.





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